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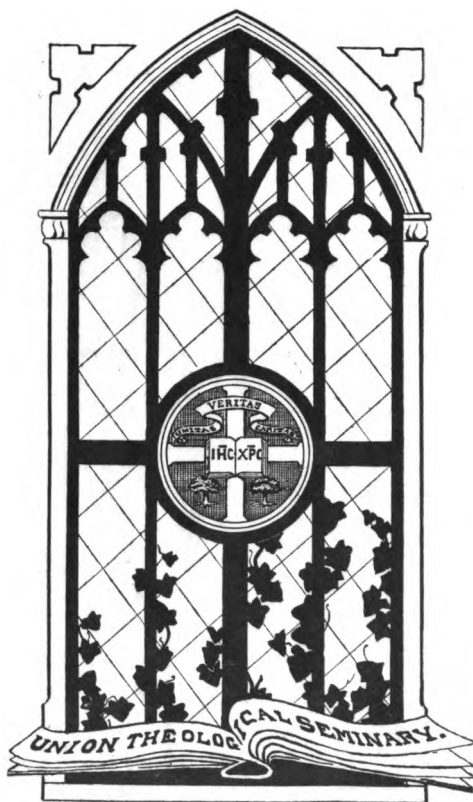
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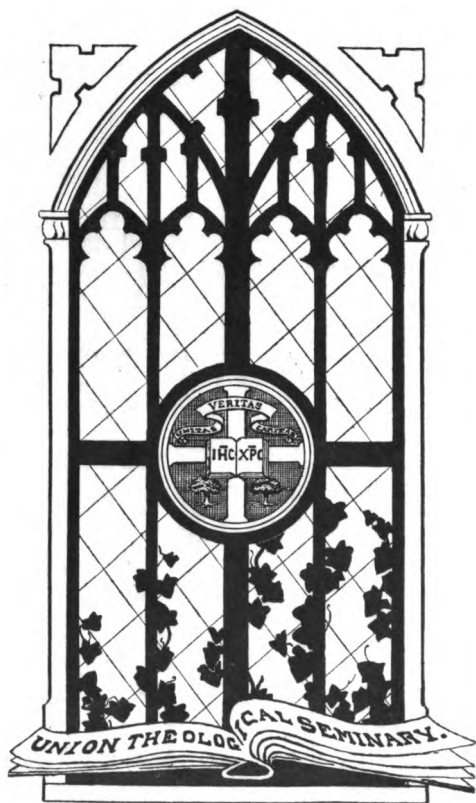


·A·Study of  
The Holy Spirit

·T·P·Stafford·

















# **A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



# A STUDY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*By*

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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
**Anna Tutt Stafford**

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## FOREWORD

LUKE gives as a reason for writing his account of Christ the fact that many others also had written narratives concerning him. I make a like apology for publishing this study of the Holy Spirit. Many writers have given us books on the Holy Spirit. They have written nobly, with insight and inspiration. It is a thing greatly to be desired to have a place in their company.

I may say that I have had opportunity to study carefully and at length the subject herein presented. For several years I have given special attention to it in preaching and in lecturing to my students and to other audiences. I have been requested frequently on these occasions to print the discourses.

While I am indebted to others for much that I have written, there are some thoughts expressed that are a result of original research. I have attempted also to apply the practical test to certain theories and to subject them to critical investi-



## FOREWORD

gation to determine whether they are worthy or wanting. This study will, therefore, I hope, be to a small degree at least, a real contribution to the literature on the subject.

T. P. STAFFORD.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., October 1, 1920.

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# I

## THE MEANING OF THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Come, thou almighty King,  
Help us thy name to sing,  
Help us to praise:  
Father! all glorious,  
O'er all victorious,  
Come, and reign over us,  
Ancient of days.

Come, thou incarnate Word,  
Gird on thy mighty sword;  
Our prayer attend;  
Come, and thy people bless,  
And give thy word success:  
Spirit of holiness,  
On us descend.

Come, Holy Comforter,  
Thy sacred witness bear  
In this glad hour:  
Thou, who almighty art,  
Now rule in every heart,  
And ne'er from us depart,  
Spirit of power!

## THE MEANING OF THE DAY OF PENTECOST

**L**ET us first read carefully Acts 2 : 1-21 :  
“And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pon-

tus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

“ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my word. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel :

And it shall be in the last days, saith God,  
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh :  
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
And your young men shall see visions,  
And your old men shall dream dreams :  
Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens  
in those days  
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall  
prophesy.  
And I will show wonders in the heaven above,

And signs on the earth beneath;  
Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:  
The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the day of the Lord come,  
That great and notable *day*:  
And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the  
name of the Lord shall be saved."

There were five great days in the beginning of Christianity: the birthday of Jesus, the day of his death, the day of his resurrection, the day of his ascension, and the day of Pentecost. Each of these days was marked and made outstanding by mighty miracles. Considering them in their historical order and significance, we see how the value of the one depends on the truth of the other. The day of the ascension is glorious because of the virgin birth, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; and the day of Pentecost was possible and is meaningful only as a result of the ascension of Christ to the place of honor and power.

*This day of Pentecost was a great day.* It was one of the greatest of all days. There has not been a greater since and will not be until Jesus comes again. Peter so explained it to the multitude who came together to see what was hap-



pening. "This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel," he says. Peter tells them that the prophecy of Joel is being fulfilled right now on this day of Pentecost and right here in this city of Jerusalem.

The "last days" of Acts 2 : 17 means the last period of time from Joel's standpoint, not ours; and Joel lived in 775 B. C. The notion that "last days" means the last days before Jesus comes again is very erroneous and makes Peter talk nonsense. Peter is talking to the point and not "scattering." Later in an address he referred to the return of Christ, but not in this one. (Acts 3 : 20, 21.) Here he is showing that the gift of the Spirit is proof that God has made Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2 : 36.) Let one turn to the prophecy of Joel and see that he does not use the expression "last days," but "afterward"; that is, after certain events and conditions that he had just described. (Joel 2 : 28.)

The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out not at the close of the Christian age, but at the beginning of it.

In like manner we should understand the expressions near the close of Peter's quotation from Joel, "the day of the Lord," and "that great and notable day." These are descriptions and desig-

nations of this day of Pentecost, not some day future to Peter and to us. Peter is not making prophecy in his address, but explaining prophecy and applying it to what was then happening, as he himself said he was doing. He is trying to convince the people not that Christ is going to come a second time, but that he has come the first time, which they were up to that moment unwilling to believe.

So this day of Pentecost is called by inspiration the "day of the Lord," and the "great and notable day."

By John the Baptist also this day was foretold. He said of Jesus, "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt. 3 : 11). Jesus promised it several times as the Gospel of John records. (John 7 : 39; 14 : 16, 26; 15 : 26; 16 : 7.) And Luke tells us that just before the ascension Jesus repeated the promise finally in language akin to John's just referred to. (Acts 1 : 4, 5, 8.)

*It is easy to see the divine wisdom of selecting the day of Pentecost for this momentous event.* Of the three great feasts of the Jews the Pass-over was the first and greatest. Jesus was put to death during this feast and rose again the third day after. Worshipers were in Jerusalem from all parts of the civilized world. Many, of course,

were remaining for the next feast, Pentecost, which, as the name indicates, came fifty days afterward. Through forty days of this time Jesus appeared at intervals to the disciples and spoke of the things of the kingdom. The Jews have had time to think over the crime of the crucifixion and the report of the resurrection. The disciples have had opportunity to reflect upon the still more glorious fact of the ascension.

Luke says, "Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven," and then he specifies the various countries from which they came, and his specification sweeps the whole compass of the world with Jerusalem as the center. The time has come for a world propaganda of the gospel, and God "sets the stage" for it in the religious center of the world, before representatives of all the nations there assembled.

The number of the disciples that were meeting together regularly in Jerusalem during the ten days previous to Pentecost was, Luke says, about one hundred and twenty. He names the apostles and the mother of Jesus, and includes in the number also certain other women and the brothers of Jesus. "These all with one accord," he says, "continued steadfastly in prayer." (Cf. Acts I : 12-15.) They were there in obedience

and loyalty to Christ; they were there in the confidence that he would keep his word; they were there in the resurrection triumph and the victory peace of their leader. It was upon such men and women that God poured forth his Spirit. Had they been persons of a less "heroic mold," had they been in a different state of mind, had they been in some other place, the Holy Spirit would not have come upon them.

But we may ask, *Were these one hundred and twenty the only true and loyal believers?* No, there were many more. Only a few days before more than five hundred persons met Jesus in an appointed place, a certain mountain in Galilee, most of whom evidently were true believers. It was not physically possible for all those who loved the Lord to be together in Jerusalem. Now as to all these absent disciples, did they not share in this gift of God? Was it limited to the one hundred and twenty only? Or were they in a sense representative of all the disciples then and since? I think this last is the correct view. Certainly not all could have been there who would have been there. Dr. A. J. Gordon calls Pentecost the "age-baptism of the Spirit." As only three disciples saw the transfiguration glory of Jesus in the "holy mount," but they all were and we all are partakers of the benefit of that glory,

so all believers are partakers of the benefit of Pentecost. By this I do not mean to say that every believer, because of Pentecost, has the power of the Spirit, but that every believer, because of Pentecost, has the privilege of receiving that power.

*How did the Holy Spirit manifest himself?*  
How was it that the disciples and the people of Jerusalem, up to this time unbelievers, became aware of the Spirit?

The answer is simple. By means of the senses, the ear and the eye. They heard from the sky "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues of fire; and it sat upon each one of them" (Acts 2 : 2, 3). The "sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind" was so loud that the people throughout the city of Jerusalem heard it. It is so stated in the Standard Version. (Acts 2 : 6.)

Once before, at the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit manifested himself in a visible form. "He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon him" (Matt. 3 : 15).

The Holy Spirit, himself, in his essential being, is invisible as God the Father is invisible. But he can manifest himself in visible forms; and we may see how fitting the different forms are to

the different purposes. Jesus was God's message of love and peace to the world. So the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove. On the day of Pentecost the age of world-wide witnessing began. So the Holy Spirit descended upon them as tongues of fire, giving them power to speak in "other tongues," or foreign languages. They were to be as firebrands in the world, not incendiary fagots, but torches aflame with the truth.

*The objective reality of the Holy Spirit is vividly realized.* He is manifested, as has been said, to the ear and to the eye. He is "*poured forth.*" He "*filled* all the house where they were sitting." And they were "*all filled* with the Holy Spirit." They were in the Spirit as a fish is in the water. So John the Baptist and Jesus, speaking in advance of the event, said they would be "baptized in the Holy Spirit." They were immersed in the Spirit as one is immersed in water. And also they were "*filled*" with the Holy Spirit as one's lungs are filled with air. They did not think of the Spirit as something subjective, as an idea or a sensation. There is not a word said as to how the disciples *felt*. But we are told how they were affected and what they *did* as a result of being "*filled*" with the Spirit. If one thinks that the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit



into one's life is ecstatic exhilaration or emotional thrills or selfish enjoyment of any kind, he is missing the truth. It matters little how we feel, but it is all important what we are and what we do.

*The immediate and outstanding effect upon the disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost was that they were given power instantaneously to speak in languages that they had not before been acquainted with.*

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2 : 4). “Other tongues” means simply languages other than their own. When the Jews and proselytes from the regions of Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, Italy, and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea, etc., being attracted to the spot by the strange sound, drew near and heard the disciples talking, some mocking said, “They are filled with new wine”; but others who understood them said in astonishment, “Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans?” and yet “we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God.”

So the “gift of tongues” was not ability to speak a language that no one understood, as some

have foolishly supposed, but it was the power to speak in a new language without having learned it. The expression "unknown tongue" found several times in the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians, in the old version, is a faulty translation and does not occur in the Greek. It is clear that Paul is not thinking of a language of meaningless sounds, for he says in verse 28, that if one who would speak in the church cannot make himself understood or cannot get his speech interpreted, he should keep silence. It certainly is no small sin against the Holy Spirit to claim that the idiotic utterance of senseless sounds is his inspired language.

*The gift of the Holy Spirit had a practical value there and then.* God wanted these "devout men from every nation under heaven" to hear the gospel. He willed also graciously to emphasize their testimony with a miracle, namely, enabling his unlettered disciples instantaneously to speak in languages hitherto unknown by them. Paul speaking, it seems, of this power of speech given directly by God, says, "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving" (1 Cor. 14 : 22). It was this great miracle on the day of Pentecost together with many other influences that converted the three thousand persons.



*In what sense did the Holy Spirit come on the day of Pentecost?*

Dr. A. J. Gordon says, "Just as Jesus Christ had a time-ministry which he came into the world to fulfil, and having accomplished it returned to the Father, so the Holy Spirit, for the fulfilment of a definite mission, came into the world at an appointed time" ("Ministry of the Spirit," p. 22). He approves Augustine's designation of Pentecost as the *dies natalis*, the birthday, of the Spirit. (Ibid., p. 27.)

True, but was the Spirit never in the world before Pentecost? It would be a great blunder to think that. Christ came into the world when he was born in Bethlehem, but he had been in the world also before. (Cf. Acts 7 : 38.) So the Holy Spirit was in the world before the day of Pentecost. He was active in creation. (Gen. 1 : 2.) He was with David. (Ps. 51 : 11.) He was with the men who wrote the prophecies of the Old Testament. (2 Peter 1 : 21.) He was with John the Baptist from his birth. (Luke 1 : 15.) He was at the baptism of Jesus and with him throughout his ministry. (Matt. 3 : 16; 4 : 1; Luke 4 : 14; John 3 : 34.) But he came with special power and for a special purpose on the day of Pentecost. He came then to *dwell* in his people and to be with them forever. (John 14 :

16, 23; Matt. 28 : 19, 20.) He came to fit the disciples for being witnesses of Christ. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1 : 8).

Dr. A. H. Strong says:

Before Christ "the Holy Spirit was not" (John 7 : 39), just as before Edison electricity was not. There was just as much electricity in the world before Edison as there is now. Edison has only taught us its existence and how to use it. Still we can say that before Edison electricity as a means of lighting, warming, and transporting people had no existence. So until Pentecost the Holy Spirit, as a revealer of Christ, "was not yet."<sup>1</sup>

I think it is a mistake to infer, as Doctor Gordon does, that the disciples made a mistake in selecting Matthias to take the place of Judas. ("Ministry of the Spirit," p. 141.) Luke says in Acts 1 : 26, "And he was numbered with the eleven apostles." This is his statement about thirty years after the selection took place. Certainly if it had been a mistake, it would have been discovered before that date. Are we to suppose that these disciples were left in darkness during the ten days from the ascension to Pentecost? They certainly knew enough to know that they were, if they were; and they certainly had no

<sup>1</sup> "Systematic Theology," Vol. I, p. 317.

mind to take things into their own hands. No, we are not to conclude that as the Holy Spirit came in a special way on the day of Pentecost, he was with the disciples in no sense before that day. Augustine spoke of the Holy Spirit as being in the world before Pentecost as a "transient visitor."

The view is best, it seems, that *Pentecost came once for all*. Pentecost was not repeated and is not now to be expected, though Pentecostal power is promised to all believers and is to be earnestly sought for by them. It is true that there was something like Pentecost in Samaria (Acts 8 : 14ff.), in Cæsarea (Acts 10 : 44ff.), and in Ephesus (Acts 19 : 2ff.), and perhaps in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 14 : 22), but it is better not to consider these to be repetitions of Pentecost, but as reproductions of certain features of the Pentecostal event. That is, they were instances of the special enduement of the Spirit accompanied with miraculous manifestations, such as took place on Pentecost. They were rather confirmations of the day of Pentecost. We should not infer that the Holy Spirit came to all believers even then as he came on Pentecost, much less that he so comes to Christians now. That was an age of miracles; ours is not. The expressions, "baptism of the Spirit" and "spiritual

baptism," should not, it seems, be applied to our experiences now. They are not found in the Bible. "Baptized in the Holy Spirit" is the expression used to describe the Pentecostal experiences only. It is not a figurative expression. It describes a literal fact. The disciples on that day were immersed in the Holy Spirit as actually as a fish is immersed in water, as we have said. On other occasions it is said men were "filled" with the Spirit, but not immersed in the Spirit.

*The day of Pentecost is proof, the best proof, that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead and is the Son of God.*

"He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1 : 4).

This was the theme of Peter's address, and it was the consideration that converted the three thousand persons. The Jesus whom they crucified has become both Lord and Christ. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2 : 36).

*The day of Pentecost proclaims the fact that the spiritual age of the world has arrived.*

It was not the day of the "first gospel sermon" or of the beginning of the gospel, or of the founding of the church as some have erroneously

affirmed. (Cf. Mark 1 : 1 and Luke 16 : 16.) It is the day of God's announcement that Christ has entered into "that which is within the veil," that the invisible Christ is the real Christ. As God, by angels, announced the incarnation of Christ in the visible world, so by the coming of the Holy Spirit he declares his enthronement in the invisible world.

Luke remarks that while Jesus was on the cross the "veil of the temple was rent in the midst" (Luke 23 : 45). This would seem to signify that the earthly tabernacle, a mere pattern, is of use no longer and that, and because that, the heavenly, the real, of which it was only a type, has become perfected.

The criterion for true Christianity is not anything visible, physical, or external, but something invisible, inward, and spiritual. The kingdom of God is spiritual. It came "not with observation." To identify the kingdom of God with a visible organization is to miss the significance of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost sounds the death-knell of ecclesiasticism. We should place no limitations upon the grace of God, as we cannot place limitations upon his power. Pentecost means that divine grace is commensurate with divine power. We should not make little channels for the grace of God as men make irrigation

ditches for water; for the grace of God, like a flood, will flow over them. It is "poured forth" as rain from bursting clouds.

The day to which the law and the prophets looked, the day when idolatry should be dead, has come.

*The day of Pentecost proclaims the absolute democracy of Christianity.*

"And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2 : 21). Access to God is the right of every soul.

"I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh :  
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
And your young men shall see visions,  
And your old men shall dream dreams :  
Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens  
in those days  
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall  
prophesy " (Acts 2 : 17, 18).

In the kingdom of God all persons have equal privileges, the young and the old, the men and the women, the free and the slave.

*The day of Pentecost meant social revolution.*  
It meant death and destruction to all institutions of autocracy then. It means it now. Kaisers and kings and princes and popes and autocrats of all

kinds, civil and religious, are by their very being enemies of the kingdom of God. Pentecost is God's call for their abdication or for their dethronement.

Equality of rights in the kingdom of God means equality of rights everywhere. Royalty is a crime. It is a conspiracy against humanity. To accept it is idolatry and prostitution. The more we banish kings from the earth, the more the people will come to their own. Every Christian is a king. (Cf. 1 Peter 2 : 9; Rev. 12 : 6; 5 : 10.) In crowning another fellow man he dethrones himself. Mr. James W. Gerard, ex-ambassador to Germany, speaking before the close of the World War of despotic rule there and elsewhere in the world, says: "Royalty still lives to torture and retard civilization. Its methods of perpetuation are unchanged since the Middle Ages."

*The day of Pentecost is the day of the people.*

Dr. B. F. Meyer beautifully says:

In Switzerland I have gone out on the veranda of the hotel at three or four o'clock in the morning and looked at the range of mountains that rose before me. At first all is gray and damp; but as I look, it seems as if God's angel has been stepping from one summit to another, lighting fires all along his path. Beneath, the mist still hangs over the valley, the clouds roll and tumble in endless confusion. As I wait and watch the

sun rises. The mists roll up and disappear. By noon the sun's rays have poured into every nook and crevice in the valley. So I think the Holy Spirit before Pentecost struck with living flame only the great mountain peaks among men. That summit was Moses; that, Samson; that, David; that, Jeremiah. But at the day of Pentecost, he who had been given only to the spiritual aristocrats of the race became the common property of the democracy.





## II

### THE CHARACTER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed  
His tender, last farewell,  
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed  
With us to dwell.

He came sweet influence to impart,  
A gracious, willing guest,  
While he can find one humble heart  
Wherein to rest.

And his that gentle voice we hear,  
Soft as the breath of even,  
That checks each thought, that calms each  
fear,  
And speaks of heaven.

Spirit of purity and grace,  
Our weakness, pitying, see ;  
O make our hearts, thy dwelling-place,  
More worthy thee.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**I**N Christian theology we have three outstanding doctrines, of which one is partly and two are wholly new and original.

What the earnest men and the great thinkers of the world saw dimly as to the nature of God, is, in Christianity, revealed clearly. God is one, God is good, God is the heavenly Father of his people. This is the sweet light of revelation. This doctrine of God is partially new and original.

The doctrine of the Son of God is altogether new and original. It does not appear that pagan minds have had even the idea of it. That one born of woman is the only-begotten and eternal Son of God, through whom is the world's redemption, is a truth that never entered into the thoughts of uninspired men. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2 : 9.)

But the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is, if possible, yet more original. Not only do the utterances of pagans contain no thought of such a divine being as the Holy Spirit, but men of the world now with the light of the gospel about them do not apprehend him. "The Spirit of

truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him " (John 14 : 17).

It will surprise one, if he has not done so before, to consider how often the Spirit is referred to in the Scriptures. If we leave out of account the Messianic *predictions*, he is mentioned oftener and with more definiteness in the time of the Old Testament than is Christ. Dr. James E. Cumming finds eighty-seven references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. (Cf. "Through the Eternal Spirit," p. 17-24.) This is a striking fact and is sufficient to correct once and for all the error that the Holy Spirit was unknown to the saints of the Old Testament. (Cf. Gen. 1 : 2; 6 : 3; Exod. 31 : 3; Num. 24 : 2; 1 Sam. 10 : 10; 2 Chron. 15 : 1; Ps. 51 : 11; Isa. 63 : 10; Luke 1 : 15, 35, 67; 2 : 26.)

But when we come to the time of the New Testament, we find that references to the being and work of the Holy Spirit abound. John the Baptist foretold his coming on the day of Pentecost. Jesus had much to say of him. The apostles, Peter and John, spoke often of him. And Paul, who was not with Jesus when he was on earth, but who was taught by him, said more about the Holy Spirit than all the other apostles put together,

Our task is to understand, in so far as we can, the character of the Holy Spirit. We honor the Holy Spirit in so doing. Knowledge is necessary to the highest form of worship, and to understand the Holy Spirit is itself true worship. (Cf. John 4 : 23.) It is, therefore, a mark of piety to desire a knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Only spiritual people wish to know more about the Holy Spirit. Indifferent Christians are dull as to the subject. Sinners mock at it or spurn it.

The natural process is first to study the *names*, *titles*, and *descriptions* of the Holy Spirit. In becoming acquainted with a person we first learn his name or names and official titles, if he has such.

God the Father has revealed his glorious and holy nature to us in this way. First his name is simply God; then it is God Almighty; then it is Jehovah, and finally it is our heavenly Father. (Cf. Gen. 1 : 1; 17 : 1; Exod. 6 : 3; Matt. 6 : 9.)

To the second person of the Trinity also are given many names and titles, all of which point to the different elements of his character, and lay stress upon his manifold relations to men. He is the Messiah, the Christ, the chosen of God; he is the Son of man; he is the Lamb of God; he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he is the Prince

of Peace. Our Saviour has all virtues and needs all designations and descriptions to picture them to us. But after language has done its noblest, he remains still the "unspeakable gift" of God.

In like manner, for the third person of the Trinity many names and descriptions are found, and each with rich significance, revealing offices, relations, and qualities of character.

The favorite name for the third person of the Trinity is *Spirit*. The term *Ghost* of the common version means the same, but has now undesirable suggestions.

We may well stop and meditate long upon this fact. As the name *Jesus* has in it infinite meaning when applied to the second Person of the Trinity, so the name *Spirit* has in it unlimited meaning when used by inspired writers of the third person of the Trinity. Spirit is not simply a designation; it is also a description. It is a term that interprets. It is, like Israel and Jesus and Peter, a character-name.

I heard a preacher of note say that he had once wondered why, since Father and Son were the names of the first and second persons of the Trinity, the name *mother*, rather than Spirit, was not given to the third person of the Trinity. Then he said that the fact, that this is not the case, has in it great value for us.

The Greek word for spirit means *wind, air, breath, life*.

The name Spirit therefore corresponds to the invisible character of the divine person and emphasizes it. The essence of godliness is not in anything sensible. The criterion of true Christianity is not something visible or external. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." The kingdom of God is not territory, nor organization, nor force, nor ceremony. It is moral suasion and love. The spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, of which the prophets were conscious when they denounced idolatry, formality, and a false nationalism, is revealed fully in the New Testament. Any church that claims to be commensurate with or identical with the kingdom of God is an apostate church.

Jesus at his ascension, like the high priest of the Jewish temple on the great day of Atonement, passed into that "which is within the veil" and became invisible. His great representative on earth is also invisible. "Whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not." The Holy Spirit may manifest himself in sensible forms, that is, miraculously, but he himself is not discerned by the senses. That psychological theory that holds that all knowledge comes by way of the five senses will not do for Christians.



Each person of the Trinity shrinks from material embodiment and manifestation. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1 : 18). "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more" (2 Cor. 5 : 16). When they appear in visible form it is miraculous and unusual. The Holy Spirit is like the Father and the Son. It is strictly true to say that the Holy Spirit is *felt, not seen.*

- The term Spirit suggests *life and the source of life.* The Jewish mind identified life and breath. (Cf. Job 27 : 3; 33 : 4; Rev. 11 : 11.) The Holy Spirit has a vital relation to us. In him we live. Every Christian is born of the Spirit. (John 3 : 3-8.) The Spirit is preeminently the giver of life. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3 : 6; Cf. 1 Cor. 15 : 45; John 6 : 63; Rom. 8 : 10, 11).

- It may not be amiss to say that the Holy Spirit is "the mother-principle in the Godhead."

Genesis 2 : 7 says, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Compare with that John 20 : 22: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." A live Christian and a spiritual man are one and the same.

Usually but not always the noun, Spirit, as the name of the third person of the Trinity, is preceded by the adjective *holy*. He is not simply *a* spirit. He is *the Holy Spirit*; as the second person of the Trinity he is not simply *a* son, but *the Son of God*. ✓

There are many kinds of spirits: "evil spirit" (2 Sam. 15: 14ff.), "lying spirit" (2 Kings 22: 22), "spirit of error" (1 John 4: 6), "spirit of anti-Christ" (1 John 4: 3). But the Spirit of God is holy. I believe that if we understand this adjective in this connection properly, we will think of the Holy Spirit as the very essence of holiness; as having that degree of holiness, or, rather, as being that quality of holiness, which should prevent us from thinking of him as other than holy. We cannot think of the sun's ray as other than light. It is so light or such light that it is the essence of light. To think of it otherwise is to violate the very law of our mind. If we should think of the Holy Spirit as being other than holy or speak of him so, we would commit a great sin. This is, it seems, "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," the sin that Jesus said would never be forgiven. It is moral, spiritual, and eternal suicide.

Jesus four times calls the Holy Spirit the *Paraclete*. (John 14: 16, 26; 15: 26; 16: 7.) Our ✓

common version and many others translate this word by *Comforter*. When our common version was made, three hundred years ago, this word meant one who strengthens, one who fully strengthens; it then gave the thought of the Greek better than it does now. Now it means one who gives consolation, and this sense is too limited and weak. The Holy Spirit did not come to give weak men "surcease from sorrow" merely, but to make weak men strong and strong men stronger. It seems to me that we ought with good grace to reject once and for all this word, comforter, no matter how much it jars morbid sentiment to do it.

The Greek word means *one called to one's side, an advocate, a helper*. Neither of these words is a perfect translation. There seems to be none that is. But either of them is better now than comforter. Jesus is thinking of the disciples as orphans. (John 14 : 18.) They needed some one to protect them, to defend them, to guide them, and to help them. All this I read into and think into the word Paraclete.

*And all this is to be read into it.* For Jesus says, "*another Paraclete.*" In this little modifier *another*, we get the full truth. The Holy Spirit was to do for them what Jesus had been doing. He was to take the place in their lives that Jesus

had been filling. Jesus had been their Paraclete, their Defender on earth. (Cf. John 18 : 8.) But now the Holy Spirit is to have this charge and Jesus is to become their Paraclete, their Advocate, in heaven. (Cf. I John 2 : 1.)

Twice Jesus calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of *truth*" (John 14 : 17; 16 : 13). And in the last case he adds, "He shall guide you into all the truth." Before he had said, "He shall teach you all things" (John 14 : 26).

We should not be disposed to limit or minimize the Spirit's relation to the truth, but rather to magnify it, and accordingly to put into the above words of Jesus all that reason and faith may see that they naturally contain.

Summing up, then, the thoughts of this language, which have to do with our present subject, we note:

First, that *truth*, like holiness, is *an essential attribute of the Spirit*. Truth belongs to the character of the Spirit as it belongs to the character of the Father and of the Son. When it is said that God is a "God of truth" (Ps. 31 : 5), more is meant than that God speaks the truth. It is meant that a lie is with God a moral impossibility. (Cf. Heb. 6 : 18.) When Jesus said, "I am the truth" (John 14 : 6), he did not mean to identify himself and the principle of

truth, but to assert that error is foreign to his nature. We may say of the Holy Spirit as the apostle said of the Father, "in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1 : 5).

We note, secondly, that *the Holy Spirit*, like the Father and the Son, *is the source of truth*. Truth must have an origin as light must have. Error has a source. There is a "lying spirit" (1 Kings 22 : 22). Every lie that has gone forth to deceive and curse the world was conceived and uttered by some being. When the devil "speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8 : 44).

God is the author and fountain of truth. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1 : 5). The Son also is the source of truth. He said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8 : 12; cf. John 1 : 9). He said, "I am the truth" (John 14 : 6). "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1 : 17). Christ is the world's prophet, the world's true teacher. So also is the Holy Spirit the true teacher, because he is the Spirit of truth.

We note, thirdly, that *one whom the Holy Spirit teaches must be a partaker of the Spirit*. Only he who has the spirit of truth can know the truth. Another way of saying the same thing is

that the Holy Spirit, in his teaching, imparts himself to the one that is taught. "Causing one to know" is thought to be the best definition of teaching. If so, the Holy Spirit is in one sense, and the profoundest sense, the only teacher; for only he can really cause one to know. The Holy Spirit does not dictate the truth; he imparts it; he implants it; he inbreathes it. His teaching is a begetting. It is a self-giving and a like-creating. This seems to be John's thought when he affirms that the "Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5 : 7).

Very interesting is this statement from President Wilson:

I have spent the greater part of my life doing what is called teaching, but many of the pupils of most of our universities systematically resist being taught. I remember being somewhat comforted and reassured some years ago, after I had taught ten or fifteen years, by being told by a friend of mine at the Yale University, who had taught for twenty years, that he had found that the human mind possessed infinite resources for resisting the introduction of knowledge.

One who receives ideas must have in him sympathy for and appreciation of those ideas. He who can create this condition of mind is the greatest teacher. The Holy Spirit does this for those who receive the true knowledge of God.

Discussing in a penetrating way a kindred thought, Dr. Frank Crane says: "Furnishing proof is the smallest part of convincing a man. The most difficult part consists in getting his mind into a condition to receive the proof."

Paul says in First Corinthians: "But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2 : 12). Again: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. 2 : 14). In Second Corinthians he says that the Jews who know well the letter of the law, do not really understand it because they have not the Spirit; that they, when they read it, have a "veil upon their heart" (2 Cor. 3 : 15).

So it is with many Gentiles also. They are "ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth." Because the spirit of error and not of truth is in them.

Dr. A. J. Gordon thinks of a horse and its rider before a sculptured figure, a work of art, in a park. The man admires the beauty of it, the heroism that is there pictured. His eyes are aglow, and his soul is thrilled. But the eyes of

the horse are dull. It has no soul, no understanding. So the natural man is dull and unmoved before the beauties and glories of salvation. But, when the Holy Spirit teaches him, he knows and exults and loves.

So much we learn as to the character of the Holy Spirit from the names, titles, and descriptions of him. We come now to learn of his character from his *acts* and *relations*, from his disposition, and from the position of honor and power that he occupies.

We may state in advance that these considerations compel us to think of the Holy Spirit as a person and as God. We defer the great subject of the deity of the Holy Spirit to another chapter. We limit ourselves here to the subject of his personality.

It is admitted that the Holy Spirit is nowhere in the Scriptures *called* a person. Jesus Christ likewise is not. But this argument has no weight. Many things are true that are not affirmed. Besides, clear implications are just as reliable, and may be more convincing, than positive statements.

We mean by person a being with reason, will, and moral sense. Things and animals do not have these; men, angels, and God do.

If the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person, then it must be one of the following things:



1. Another name for God; the purpose, thought, and mind of God; that is, God himself; as when we say "the spirit of a man," meaning the man himself. This cannot be a correct view, for it fails to meet the demands of many passages of Scripture. At the baptism of Jesus the three beings of the Trinity are separate and distinct. (Matt. 3 : 16, 17.) Jesus spoke of the Father's giving and sending the Holy Spirit to the disciples, and of his own sending of him to them, and of the Holy Spirit's proceeding from the Father. (John 14 : 16, 26; 15 : 26; 16 : 7.) This language would have been impossible if the Holy Spirit were the same person as the Father. The Holy Spirit makes intercession to the Father for us. (Rom. 8 : 26.) This certainly does not mean that the Father prays to himself. Jesus in the Great Commission and Paul in his oft-repeated benediction think of the three of the Trinity as separate and distinct beings. (Matt. 28 : 19; 2 Cor. 13 : 14.)

It is true that there is an identity of the Father and the Spirit, as there is also an identity of the Son and the Spirit, but this identity is such as is possible between persons. (Cf. Acts 5 : 3, 4; 2 Cor. 3 : 17, 18; 1 Cor. 2 : 16.)

2. A condition, or state, of the human mind. The Holy Spirit, according to this view, is not

an objective reality, but something subjective only.

Spinoza taught that the Holy Spirit is a superior understanding or intuition of religious truth. This was what came to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. The founder of Christian Science repeats this pagan explanation. It is at least semi-infidelity.

It is only a little better to hold that the Holy Spirit is a good condition of mind; that to have the Holy Spirit is to have the thought or mind of God. But certainly when Jesus told the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high, he was not promising them that they would at a certain time become pious.

A subjective state of the human mind does not work miracles nor convert sinners. The Holy Spirit is not an enlightened conscience.

Once, when I was a young man, a shrewd old gentleman was trying to convert me to his denominational views. He had made out a very good case from certain texts of the Bible. Being somewhat disturbed by his arguments, and sparring for time, I asked him what his denomination taught as to the Holy Spirit. He said: "Suppose you are on a journey, and I fall in with you and make a proposition to you, which

you at first decline to accept. But as we ride along, I argue the case and convert you to my view, and you join with me in the undertaking. You may be said now to have my mind. So is one who has the Holy Spirit. He has God's mind or God's view of things." Then I saw how hollow his system was.

The distinction between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit is clearly recognized by Paul. (Rom. 8 : 16, 26, 27; Gal. 3 : 2.) It is difficult to imagine how a reader of the Bible could have any other notion about it. If then there be a oneness of the spirit of the Christian with the Holy Spirit, it is a oneness that is possible between persons. It is like the oneness of Christ and the Christian. It is not identity, but unity. (Cf. 1 Cor. 6 : 17.)

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit involves a kind of mysticism, but not such as causes to vanish the personality of the worshiper or of his God. Christian mysticism has no kinship with pantheistic mysticism.

3. A third theory is that the Holy Spirit is simply an influence; a moral force that makes for righteousness; like the temperance movement, for example.

To state this view is sufficient to refute it. Paul says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God"

(Eph. 4 : 30). An influence cannot be grieved. Only a person can be grieved. The Holy Spirit makes intercession to the Father. An influence cannot make intercession. The Holy Spirit *is* not an influence, but the Holy Spirit, like a great and good man, *has* an influence.

If the Holy Spirit cannot be explained by any of the above theories, which are really inspired by unbelief rather than by faith and sound criticism, then it must follow that he is a person; for which view there are many more proofs than are here given. *Person* is the best word at our command. Should a better one be invented we will use that.

It is noticeable that as one grows in grace, he becomes more aware of the personal character of the Holy Spirit. We may say, indeed, that one's progress as a Christian is measured by his conception of the Holy Spirit as a person and his feeling corresponding and responding thereto. In this fact of Christian experience there is a most conclusive demonstration of the personality of the Spirit. There is no better proof that God is a person than that found in experience. Those who think of God and worship him as such, become fervent and spiritual and strong. Those who think of him otherwise, become dull and materialistic and weak. In like manner Chris-

tians who are conscious of the Spirit as a person, become prayerful, unworldly, and Christlike. Christians who are lacking in this consciousness, are lacking also in these virtues. He is a little rude in speech who speaks to a mother of her babe as *it*. Her child is infinitely more than this impersonal pronoun indicates. So he who uses "it" for the Holy Spirit, is in spiritual knowledge somewhat crude. Jesus used "he," not "it," in referring to the Holy Spirit. (John 16 : 13, 14.)

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This means that, whenever we speak of God, we should do it with thoughtfulness and reverence. Speaking carelessly of the Holy Spirit is also unbecoming. It is profanity.

We see, then, if our discussion of this subject has proceeded upon right lines, how a knowledge of the character of the Holy Spirit is vitally related to the character of Christians.

### III

## THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH

Lead, kindly Light ! amid th' encircling gloom,  
Lead thou me on ;  
The night is dark, and I am far from home ;  
Lead thou me on ;  
Keep thou my feet : I do not ask to see  
The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou  
Shouldst lead me on ;  
I loved to choose and see my path ; but now  
Lead thou me on :  
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long thy power has blessed me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone ;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile !

## THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH

**I**T is important that we know the purpose of Christ's coming into the world. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19 : 10). He came to glorify the Father. (John 17 : 4.) We cannot really understand Christ until we know the purpose for which he came.

Likewise it is important to know the purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming. We will appreciate and honor him in proportion to our knowledge of the work he came to do.

The Holy Spirit's mission is threefold: in behalf of Christ, of the church, and of the world.

The primary purpose of the Spirit's coming was to *glorify Christ* and to make effectual what he had done; to *realize* in believers the fact and value of his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus says: "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16 : 14, 15). Again, "He shall bear witness of me" (John 15 : 26). And again, "He shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak" (John 16 : 13).



As Jesus came to glorify the Father, so the Holy Spirit came to glorify the Son. On the day of Pentecost the divine character and mission of Christ were made real to the disciples. Jesus said, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14 : 20). "That day" means Pentecost. Then was realized in the minds of the disciples the glory of Christ.

Dr. A. J. Gordon expresses the truth concerning this matter accurately and forcefully thus : <sup>1</sup>

In the order of the unfolding ages we see each of the persons of the Godhead in turn exercising an earthly ministry and dealing with man in the work of redemption. Under the law God the Father comes down to earth and speaks to men from the cloud of Sinai and from the glory above the mercy-seat ; under grace, God the Son is in the world, teaching, suffering, dying, and rising again ; under the dispensation of election and out-gathering now going on, the Holy Spirit is here carrying on the work of renewing and sanctifying the church, which is the body of Christ. There is a necessary succession in these divine ministries, both in time and in character. In the days of Moses it might have been said, "Christ is not yet," because the economy of God-Jehovah was not completed. The law must first be given, with its sacrifices and types and ceremonies and shadows ; man must be put on trial under

<sup>1</sup> "Ministry of the Spirit," p. 33f.

the law, till the appointed time of his schooling should be completed. *Then* must Christ come to fulfil all types and terminate all sacrifices in himself; to do for us "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," and to become "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." When in turn Christ had completed his redemption-work by dying on the cross for our sins, and rising again from the dead for our justification, and had taken his place at God's right hand for perpetual intercession, *then* the Holy Ghost came down to communicate and realize to the church the finished work of Christ. In a word, as God the Son fulfils to men the work of God the Father, so God the Holy Ghost realizes to human hearts the work of God the Son.

I think we can truly say that if the Holy Spirit had not come, Christ would have failed. We would be compelled, judging from analogies, to say, that he would have faded from the memories of men. It is said that a certain French enthusiast recounted to Rousseau his plan for the salvation of the world, to whom Rousseau replied, "Your plan seems to be a good one, but you must get yourself crucified for it in order that it may succeed." But that is not the whole truth. Many a cause has died with the martyrdom of its founder. Socrates lived a beautiful life and preached a beautiful gospel and died for it, but all this did not make him a savior of Athens, nor

of the world. Not even the resurrection of Christ would have saved him from oblivion. But the Holy Spirit did not let the world forget. He shall "bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14 : 26).

Some have thought that we should talk and preach overmuch about the Holy Spirit. Now it is true that this subject has been neglected by many. It is true now of some, as it was of the few disciples in Ephesus, they do not know so much as whether there be a Holy Spirit. (Cf. Acts 19 : 2.) But we should remember that the Holy Spirit did not come to glorify himself, but Christ, and that when Christ is proclaimed and honored the Holy Spirit is pleased. When Peter preached to Cornelius and his friends, he told them the story of Jesus and said nothing about the Holy Spirit. That was exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted him to do, and he came upon that congregation in demonstration of the truth of Peter's sermon. So will he ever give his witness to the message that honors Jesus. Jesus said he did not glorify himself, but the Father. (John 8 : 50.) So the Holy Spirit does not glorify himself, but the Son.

There is a universal reverence for the name of Jesus. Why? There is a "holy hush" as we partake of the Lord's Supper. Why? I believe

it is because the Holy Spirit convicts human hearts of Christ's holiness. There is a strange power in the gospel of Christ to regenerate and save. Why? It is because the gospel being the truth, the Spirit of truth makes it effectual. There is a mighty and mysterious power in the word of God. Why? Because the word of God, being the sword of the Spirit, is the Spirit's mighty weapon for execution. But the Spirit seeks no prominence for himself.

However, it is helpful to us and acceptable to our Lord that we recognize and speak often of the Holy Spirit, as he himself and the apostles did.

*The mission of the Holy Spirit in behalf of Christians* is set forth with considerable completeness in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John. In those conversations with the disciples Jesus returns again and again to this subject.

In the previous discussion, it was necessary, in studying the nature of the Holy Spirit, to say much concerning his mission to the church. For example, the qualities of his character, as described in the expression "another paraclete," can be understood only in the light of what he did in and for the disciples. We need not repeat here what was said there.

D

The casual reader of the New Testament can observe the great difference there was in the disciples before and after the day of Pentecost. Where we saw confusion, hesitation, fear, weakness, we now behold insight, decision, courage, strength. They are transformed; they are new men.

I. *The Holy Spirit enlightened them. He illumined their minds.*

Three things are necessary for seeing: an object to be seen, an eye with which to see, and an atmosphere in which we see. The third is as necessary as the first and second. One is in a gallery and can see nothing. There are beautiful statues and paintings all about him, and he has two good eyes in his head, but he cannot see anything in the dark. To have sight we must have light.

One of the things that we should wonder at is our unspeakable dulness as to religious truth. God has revealed it in abundance, and our minds are reasonably bright in other things, but in this way, which is the King's Highway, we move like snails. He, who is a genius in the wisdom of the world, is often a dullard in the wisdom of God. That he has no interest in this, "the queen of the sciences," is proof of the proposition. He is a goat in a gallery of fine arts. It would rather

deal with the garbage-can. Paul says that the natural man does not know spiritual things and cannot know them except by the Spirit. (Cf. 1 Cor. 2 : 10-16.) The gospel is as a sealed book, as a hidden spring, to the Jews who have not the Spirit. (Cf. 2 Cor. 3 : 12-18.)

But Christians too are often slow of apprehension. (Cf. Luke 24 : 25.) Jesus told his disciples many things that they did not at the time understand. They needed special help. They needed light within. (Cf. Luke 24 : 27, 45.) "In thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36 : 9). The Holy Spirit is this light, for he is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14 : 17; 16 : 13).

*2. The Holy Spirit gives to the believer assurance. That is, the Holy Spirit enables him to know that he is a Christian.*

To know that I am a child of God and shall not come into condemnation, that I have forgiveness of all sins, past, present, and future, that I am truly a Christian and am heir to immortality and the eternal glories of heaven, that I shall be like Christ, this is indeed sublime knowledge. It is the source of a joy that is unspeakable. But many do not have this joy and inspiration. They live in the shadows of doubt, not in the sunshine of Christian assurance. They sing in tones of dolefulness:

'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it gives me anxious thought,  
Do I love the Lord or no?  
Am I his or am I not?

It certainly is a mistake to hold that one is not a Christian unless he knows that he is a Christian. But why should we live in ignorance and the "slough of despond"? There is a way to know. In reading the First Epistle of John one may see how the apostle affirms repeatedly that believers may know that they are saved. It is not a matter of *believing* only; it is a fact that we may also *know*. (Cf. 1 John 2 : 3, 13, 14, 20, 29; 3 : 14, 16, 19; 4 : 2, 7, 13, 16; 5 : 2, 10, 13, 19.) Of these sixteen references one says that Christian knowledge in general comes by means of the anointing of the Holy One (1 John 2 : 20), which language seems to refer to the Holy Spirit; one says that the fact that we have the Spirit is proof that we abide in God (1 John 4 : 13); and one says that the believer has the "witness within him" (1 John 5 : 10), namely, that Jesus is the Son of God. The context shows quite certainly that this "within" testimony is that of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. 1 John 5 : 7, 8.)

Paul is as positive and explicit, if not so penetrating, as John. He says that the "Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are

children of God" (Rom. 8 : 16). Three times Paul speaks of the "earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 1 : 22; 5 : 5; Eph. 1 : 13, 14). This word "earnest" means proof or evidence. We have it in the expression "earnest-money," that is, first money paid down on a bargain to secure it and as evidence that the rest will be paid. In the first passage Paul thinks of his having the Holy Spirit as God's proof that he is in Christ. It is conclusive evidence to him and should be to the Corinthians. In giving to him the Holy Spirit God established the fact, and "set his seal" to it, underwrote it, subscribed his name to it, that Paul is in Christ. In the second passage Paul says that the Holy Spirit is proof of our immortality. In the third passage Paul regards the Holy Spirit as a proof of both present salvation and our future inheritance and glory.

In using the word proof, or evidence, as designating the knowledge which the Holy Spirit gives, there is danger that we think of a kind of knowledge that is inferior to or that falls below certainty. What one knows by proof is not the most certain knowledge. With reference to some of the passages cited, as those in which the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of what is yet future, it is clear that the words are properly used. But in other passages, for example, as Romans 8 : 16



and 1 John 2 : 20; 5 : 10, the thought is not of a knowledge that comes by the Holy Spirit as a medium, but of immediate knowledge of present reality which one has by virtue of the Holy Spirit being in him. They deal not with inferential knowledge, but conscious knowledge.

There are three kinds of knowledge. First, knowledge that comes through the senses. For example, I know that I am writing with a pencil. I see and feel it. Secondly, knowledge that comes from reason or the logical faculty. For example, I know with a great degree of certainty, but not with absolute certainty, that the thermometer will reach the zero-point this winter in Kansas City. This is inferential, inductive knowledge and comes short of absolute certainty. But it may reach very close to it. Upon this kind of knowledge men are sometimes hanged.

Thirdly, the knowledge of consciousness. For example, one's knowledge of his own identity. I know when I wake up in the morning that I am the same person I was yesterday. How do I know this? Not by looking in the mirror. Not by the senses nor by reasoning. I know it by intuition. I am conscious of myself.

It is, I think, a knowledge of this superior kind with which we know Christ and the present realities of his kingdom. We are conscious of him

and of them. There is no knowledge more certain. We do not prove to ourselves the reality of Christ, as we do not prove to ourselves the reality of ourselves. We are given to ourselves in experience, and the self arises into consciousness. Christ too is given to us in experience and comes thus into our consciousness. The Holy Spirit makes possible this certainty.

3. *The Holy Spirit confirms us in our work and faith. His very presence is proof of God's approval; that our course of action is a proper one and that our faith is the true faith.*

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the day of Pentecost was not only a proof of the exaltation of Jesus to the place of power, but it was also a demonstration of God's approval of them. When the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles assembled in the house of Cornelius, Peter knew that God had accepted them, and accordingly he commanded that they be baptized. (Acts 10 : 47, 48.)

Paul tells the Galatians that their receiving the Spirit "by the hearing of faith" is proof that salvation by faith, and not by the "works of the law," is God's way. (Gal. 3 : 2-5.) The Holy Spirit himself also is a gift and comes to us not by virtue of any work that we have done. Peter said to the inquirers on the day of Pentecost:

“Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2 : 38). The “gift of the Holy Spirit” is the Holy Spirit himself, not some talent or power which the Holy Spirit bestows. Peter’s thought is: Ye shall receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit does not approve false doctrine. Believing an untruth would not create a good spirit in a man, but an evil one. The Holy Spirit is in those men only who believe the truth and act according to it.

4. *The Holy Spirit guided the disciples.*

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth” (John 16 : 13; cf. 14 : 16; Matt. 10 : 17-20; Mark 13 : 11; Luke 12 : 12; 21 : 12-15).

Guidance is illumination and more. It is understanding or knowledge plus something. It is practical wisdom. The Holy Spirit aids and induces to useful activities. Nothing short of results and efficiency will satisfy the Spirit. Intellectual enjoyment, mystical meditation, ecstatic exhilaration, transfiguration thrills, and other such experiences, that easily degenerate into selfishness and worthlessness, have small place in the spiritual man. The Spirit is more concerned with *what we do* than with *how we feel*.

Accordingly we read that the Spirit sent Philip to speak to the eunuch (Acts 8 : 29) ; that he directed the church at Antioch to send forth Paul and Barnabas on a missionary enterprise (Acts 13 : 2) ; that he withheld Paul from preaching in a certain region (Acts 16 : 7) ; that he directed Paul to go to Jerusalem where persecutions awaited him (Acts 20 : 22) ; that he guided the apostles, elders, and church at Jerusalem in making a decision on an important matter (Acts 15 : 22, 28) ; that Jesus was subject to the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 4 : 1).

The effect of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the apostles is specified. "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14 : 26). "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come" (John 16 : 13). In these statements of Jesus it is clearly and positively affirmed that the Holy Spirit would increase to the utmost the apostles' power of memory with regard to what he had said to them and would give to them more than natural insight into the future. And here we have not only the basis for the doctrine of the inspiration of the apostles, but also an explanation of its character. The inspiration of the apostles was not only a quickened consciousness of present realities, but also an increased power to

recall the past and to lay hold of the future. We can trust them absolutely to give us a true picture of Jesus and to give revelations, predictions, and teachings with regard to the future. The supposition that the memory of the apostles was subject to limitations and errors, as a merely natural memory is, and that, therefore, their account of what Jesus said and did is not wholly reliable, is excluded. The supposition that they were religious geniuses and were, by virtue of superior natural endowments, able to discern the profound needs of human souls for ages to come, becoming thereby revealers or interpreters of religious truth, as Shakespeare was of human nature, is likewise excluded. Jesus said that what they were to receive, not what they already possessed, would give them this ability. Though this power may work within them, it is a power that comes from without them and is neither part nor quality of them. Paul and Peter have this conception of the inspiration of the writers of the Old Testament. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3 : 16 and 2 Peter 1 : 21.)

It would seem that with the prophets and apostles the inspiration of oral utterances was of a like kind with the inspiration of written utterances. (Cf. 1 Cor. 14 : 37 ; 2 Peter 3 : 16.)

While we cannot now lay claim to such a degree of inspiration or such a distinct guidance of

the Holy Spirit as the apostles and some other early disciples were favored with, we, nevertheless, have to a less degree his gracious guidance. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8 : 14).

A traveler needs three things: eyes, a road, and light. He must have them all if he finds his way. If we find the path of duty, we must also have three things: conscience, the word of God, and the Holy Spirit.

Charles Kingsley, at twenty-one years of age, in unrest of soul, wrote to a Christian friend:

You believe that you have a sustaining Hand to guide you along that path, an Invisible Protection, and an unerring Guide. I, alas! have no stay for my weary steps, but that same abused and stupefied reason which has stumbled, and wandered, and betrayed me a thousand times ere now, and is every moment ready to faint and to give up the unequal struggle.

He realized that to find the right way one must have something more than human wisdom. Harry Emerson Fosdick makes this comment:<sup>2</sup>

If Kingsley had framed his final philosophy then, what a loss to the world, of an inspiring life transfigured by Christian faith! He cried after discernment, lifted up

<sup>2</sup> "Meaning of Faith," p. 30.

his voice for understanding, and he found the knowledge of God.

Few men of the last generation had as much spiritual influence and did as much good as George Mueller, of England. How he built up a great orphanage and fed and clothed thousands of helpless children was the marvel and admiration of his day. He tells us how he found the will of God. You will notice that he gives prominence to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He says:

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter.

Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what his will is.

Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God.

The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, he will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with his Word and Spirit.

I ask God in prayer to reveal his will to me aright. Thus through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

From the very nature of the case no mechanical rule can be given for conduct. To attempt to announce a general rule that will be applicable to all particular and specific cases and be the solution of them, is to attempt the impossible. It is in fact a contradiction in thought. It would turn a moral agent into an automaton. Thomas wanted to know the way and Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14 : 6). He could not say more. Christian character is developed and revealed in our application of the principles of the life of Christ to the numerous and complex problems of our life. Every healthy system digests and assimilates food for itself. Discovering the mind of Christ and working out the will of Christ in the plan and details of my life is *my* job. Mechanical rules cannot help me. But the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" can and



does help me. (Rom. 8 : 2.) Let me be careful to discern the "mind of the Spirit" (Rom. 8 : 27).

To all that had been said on this subject of the guidance of the Holy Spirit this limitation should be added. The Holy Spirit does not lead us contrary to the Word, as was noted in the quotation from Mr. Mueller. It is an evil spirit that ignores and refuses to listen to the Word. He who rejects the Word of God on any subject, on which it speaks, is, so far as he does it, led by his own wilful, if not wicked, spirit, however great a show of piety he may display. The "inner light" must harmonize with and reflect the "outer light" of God's inspired Word; otherwise it is not light, but darkness. The Quakers stand forth as a fine object-lesson and a warning to us. They rejected the plain commands of Holy Writ, being guided, as they supposed, by an inner light, and God has taken away their candlestick. Not a few members of evangelical churches professing the same humility and sanctity are walking in the same way of spiritual pride and impotency. (Cf. Isa. 8 : 20.)

5. *The Holy Spirit gave power to the disciples.*

Jesus, referring to the day of Pentecost, said to his disciples as he was about to depart from them, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy

Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1 : 8). "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father" (John 14 : 12). "I will not leave you orphans" (John 14 : 18).

Paul said to Timothy: "God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power" (2 Tim. 1 : 7).

Christians are not to be weak and beggarly. They are not to fawn and cringe and court favor. They have a message that grips the mind and heart, a message of love, of truth, and of judgment. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is also the baptism of fire. (Cf. Matt. 3 : 11.)

But we will speak of this subject especially and at length later.

#### *6. The Holy Spirit makes intercession for Christians.*

Paul says: "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8 : 26, 27).

This is a remarkable passage. The Holy Spirit does a work for us on earth and also before the throne. He is, in this, like Jesus who was our

advocate on earth, but is now our "Advocate with the Father" (John 2 : 1 ; cf. Heb. 7 : 25). Their work for the saints is complete. It is both here and there. It is in us and also for us.

This intercession of the Spirit for Christians in the Holy of Holies should be consciously realized by them as sufficient to meet every need. If there is a conscious need in enlightened and spiritual Christians for a perfect intercession as well as for a perfect salvation, and it is evident that there is, they have it in the person of the Holy Spirit and not in the person of the "Virgin" Mary.

We have found that the Holy Spirit does these six things for us: he enlightens the mind, he gives us assurance of salvation, he confirms us in the true faith and in a good course, he guides, he endues us with power, he makes intercession for us, interpreting our prayers and making them effectual.

## IV

# THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE WORLD

**E**

In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopped my mad career.

I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood;  
He fixed his languid eyes on me,  
As near the cross I stood.

O never, till my latest breath,  
Shall I forget that look!  
It seemed to charge me with his death,  
Though not a word he spoke.

A second look he gave, which said,  
"I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I died that thou mayst live."

Thus, while his death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too.

## THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE WORLD

**T**HE world is not aware of the Holy Spirit. It does not know him nor of him. "Whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14 : 17.) But he has a mission to the world, nevertheless. Though men that are unsaved do not know him and do not want to know him, and may never be saved, they are, notwithstanding, the objects of his grace.

In this the Holy Spirit is like the Son. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not" (John 1 : 10). "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1 : 4), and yet they were not aware of it. God's grace is greater than our knowledge or gratitude.

But we should not conclude that the Holy Spirit is "diffused," so to speak, throughout the world, and that he does a work in the heart of every person such as we are to describe. It seems proper to say with Dr. A. J. Gordon and others that the Holy Spirit's mission to the world is

accomplished only in connection with the truth of the gospel and never without it. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers, but not in the world. (Cf. 1 Cor. 3 : 16.) He does not dwell in unbelievers. Accordingly what he does for them is done from without; that is, by means of the truth or the word of God. Let us recall that with Jesus a favorite designation of the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14 : 17; 15 : 26; 16 : 13), and that he identifies God's word with truth. (John 17 : 17.) The word of God is the "sword of the Spirit" or the weapon which the Spirit wields. (Cf. Eph. 6 : 17.)

The ministry of the Spirit to unbelievers is to make the word of God effective in them to the extent of causing them to know that it is the word of God. This ministry is summed up in one word, namely, *conviction*.

*"And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged"* (John 16 : 8-11).

This is the one and only passage in the Bible that definitely states and explains the effect of the Holy Spirit upon unbelievers as such.

The conviction is threefold. Its elements are sin, righteousness, and judgment.

*The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin.*

Two facts in regard to the question of sin stand out prominently. The first is that it is fundamental in the Christian conception of fallen human nature. The second is that it gives value to the doctrine of redemption. The worth of salvation is determined by the consideration of what one is saved from. If sin is a small matter, salvation is a small matter. When we minimize sin we minimize Christ.

Now, if one will compare carefully the Bible view of sin and the world's view of it, one will be greatly impressed. Buddha, Socrates, and Plotinus are three good representatives of the world's thought and teaching on the subject. There is in men generally the feeling that there is something wrong with them. But when this feeling attempts to give an account of itself, it falls far below the Christian conception of sin.

Buddha realizes that there is something wrong with human nature. But the wrong is a part of human nature. It is not something that has overtaken man. It is something that belongs to him. To be rid of it he must be rid of himself. Buddha did not teach self-denial, but self-annihilation. Buddha was a pantheist, and consequently he



knew nothing of sin as the violation of the law of a personal and holy God. Man, like an ant, finds himself at the base of the mountain, and there is nothing for him to do, if he would be at the top, but to climb. Sin is not the word for Buddha, but pain or sorrow, and desire is the cause of sorrow. The dying down of desire brings surcease from sorrow. By this process one reaches Nirvana, the Buddhist's heaven. There is here no true teaching concerning sin and salvation. It is the sad groping in the darkness of a great and earnest soul.

Socrates' view is light and superficial. Sin is a mistake. It results from ignorance. Its cure is knowledge. The notion that sin is lawlessness, that it is rebellion, that it is the assertion of self against the holy will of God, and that it has guilt, which must be atoned for, is not found in Socrates. If Socrates knew of Moses, he did not learn anything from him. Neither Buddha nor Socrates conceives of sin as so heinous to God and so "deepdyed" in men that their only hope with regard to it is his forgiveness and regenerating grace.

The theory of Plotinus, the founder of Neo-Platonism, is antichristian. To God, or the first being of all, there is no sin. Because there can be nothing contrary to his being. He is himself

all reality. Therefore, sin has no real existence. It is merely the absence of reality. It is to reality as darkness is to light. It is the lack of perfection. It is a defect or negation, but nothing positive. It is related to perfection as childhood is to manhood. There is nothing that offends God or goes contrary to his will or thought. If there be that which appears to be offensive to God, it is because of our imperfect way of viewing things. God himself knows no such thing as sin. To him all is harmonious, beautiful, and good. What we call sin is only the lack of a quality in us which we are yet to possess. Plotinus was, as will have appeared, a pantheist.

This theory was developed to the summit of perfection by Spinoza, the greatest of all pantheists and infidels, and has been adopted bodily by the founder of Christian Science, also pantheist and infidel. It serves very well a certain kind of evolution. But it is antibiblical, antichristian, and antimoral. It is altogether pagan. It is impossible with men and women who think of God as a heavenly Father, as a person with ethical qualities, reason, purpose, a sense of right and wrong, mercy and love.

Buddha thinks the trouble with human nature is pain; Socrates thinks it is ignorance; and Plotinus and his imitators think it is imperfection.

They all, and especially Socrates and Plotinus, prescribe knowledge as a panacea for the world's ills. But these great men on this subject are like "children crying in the night"; their language lacks articulation. They feel but do not understand. It is not possible to know what sin is without a revelation of what God is.

But the voice of the Bible is clear and certain. It knows what sin is and how it originated. It traces its history. It recites vivid tragedies of it. Sin is wickedness; it is iniquity; it is missing the mark; it is overreaching; it is transgression; it is in the heart as well as in the head; it is something black, unclean, deformed, and ugly; God cannot look upon it. It is a deadly thing; it is a poison and a curse; death camps on the trail of sin. The sinner is guilty; he carries the weight of his sin upon him; his sin finds him out. Sin is what it is because God is what he is, terrible in holiness, from whom none can hide, whose righteous wrath strikes like a thunderbolt in the day of judgment and consumes like a furnace in the day of vengeance. Sin is the cause of all our woe. Sin must be punished. He who has its mark upon him is exiled from the presence of God, and if he be unforgiven is doomed to everlasting shame and contempt. Sin creates hell. Sin has caught every one in its evil net; not one can

escape. Only the mercy of God can deliver the soul.

The mission of the law was to educate a nation and the world on the subject of sin, to cause them to know what it is and how bad it is. Paul says, "I had not known sin, except through the law" (Rom. 7 : 7). Again he says that the law was given "that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7 : 13). And once more: "The law came in beside, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom. 5 : 20). Paul does not mean, as some suppose, that in any place where sin is rampant grace is abundant. He is thinking of it abounding subjectively, not objectively. He means just this: that to the Jews, who were more conscious of sin, God showed more favor.

We have Paul for our authority that the contribution of the Jewish nation to the civilization of the world is a quickened moral consciousness. The Romans gave to the world jurisprudence; the Greeks, esthetics; the Jews, ethics.

But when we come to Christ we get a better knowledge of sin. We cannot explain him apart from the fact of sin. Sin brought him into the world; sin nailed him to the cross. Sin caused the cry of agony, "My God, my God, why hast

thou forsaken me?" Calvary more than Sinai teaches us the nature of sin. There is only one thing that outruns and overreaches and is stronger than sin, and that is the love of God.

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit "*will convict the world in respect of sin.*" He means that from Pentecost on men will have a more vivid realization of sin; and on the day of Pentecost we have a good illustration of what he meant. On that day men, who had been for fifty days guilty of the murder of the Son of God and unmoved and unashamed, were brought suddenly under deep conviction of their crime. The sermon of Peter played its part, to be sure; but the Holy Spirit drove the "two-edged sword" in, piercing to the conscience.

Another good illustration is Paul's consciousness of sin. In no Bible character is it so real and vivid. David in none of his penitential psalms equals Paul. Newman Smyth thus draws the contrast between them:<sup>1</sup>

Very interesting, and instructive also, as distinguishing these eras in the growth of conscience, is the comparison which we may make without drawing at all upon our imagination, between the same (seventh) chapter of Romans and the Fifty-first Psalm. The psalm is like a child's cry of contrition in its mother's

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Ethics," p. 166f.

lap: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." But the chapter of Romans is the cry of a man's soul from out the depths: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" The former is a youth's quick contrition, and easily reviving hope: "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." The latter is a man's soberer recognition of his moral inability, and his profounder moral despair: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not." The former is quick to own the human sinfulness from which the transgression which is confessed had sprung: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In the latter the dark fact of original sin falls into the background, and the sense of personal guilt pervades with its deep gloom the moral consciousness: "But I am carnal, sold under sin." The moral law as the will of God is acknowledged in the psalm: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." In the confession of sin in Romans the law is recognized as in itself something holy, and the commandment good. The psalm is the weeping of a penitent child who has done a wrong act, and is distressed by the shame of it. The confession of sin in Romans is the voice of a man who has learned how helpless and worthless he is before the pure righteousness of God, and who knows that he must perish as one bound to death unless he can become upright and stand as a just

soul among the just in the presence of the God of righteousness. We turn to the penitential psalm when we would mourn over particular sins; we read that profounder chapter of St. Paul's experience when we would fathom our deepest personal consciousness of the human sinfulness from which we would be delivered as from a body of death.

Now this profounder knowledge of sin in Paul corresponds to his profounder knowledge of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works conviction of sin, because the Holy Spirit is holy. In his white light dark shadows, that were before unknown, are seen and felt.

Jesus explains: "*Of sin, because they believe not on me.*"

Since Jesus saw a relation between sin and unbelief in himself we ought to try earnestly to see it.

Two considerations help us to understand his statement. First, Jesus is the criterion of character. It is not the law, but one who is the fulfilment and exemplification, in his own person, of the law, and greater than the law, who has now become the law of life for us. As Jesus is the author of salvation and the door into the kingdom, so is he also the standard by which character and conduct, virtue and vice are to be determined.

The second consideration is that one's attitude to Jesus reveals character. It is a matter of small moment to one's character whether he is for or against George Washington or Frederick the Great of Prussia. It concerns his political views only, but saints and sinners are arrayed on both sides. But Jesus is the dividing-line between saints and sinners. He attracts the pure; he repels the vicious. He is a savor of life unto life to the one, a savor of death unto death to the other. (Cf. 2 Cor. 2 : 16.)

The word that Jesus uses for the attitude which he condemns is "*believe not.*" We are of course not to give any refined technical meaning to this word in this connection. It means simply being for Jesus or against him, committing oneself to him or holding aloof. The one is with God righteousness, the other sin. Sometimes one hears the subject of faith in Christ spoken of as if it were a "voluntary willing," an isolated mental choice unrelated to moral worth; but this is not true. To reject Christ is to confirm oneself in badness. To say, "I expect to be a Christian some time, but not now," is like saying, "I expect to be honest some time, but not now." When therefore one does not believe in Christ he not only makes God a liar, as John in his epistle says (1 John 5 : 10), but he also shows himself to



be in a profound sense dishonorable. Unbelief is a root-sin. It was the initial element in the first sin, when the devil was trusted and God was distrusted, and has been the initial element in every succeeding sin. Since to believe on Christ is the work of God (John 6 : 29), so, on the other hand, not to believe on him is the work of the evil one.

In being an index of character faith is like love. What one loves indicates what he is. Jesus said: "And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil" (John 3 : 19). Paul said, "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema" (1 Cor. 16 : 22). If one loves not what is most lovely, he himself is unlovely. But an entire absence of faith in Jesus Christ is a still stronger proof of degeneracy. Jesus says, "He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3 : 18). God's judgments are not arbitrary. He that does not believe is condemned, because he is condemnable. The question of all questions is, *What do you think of Jesus Christ?* Eternal destinies are fixed by it, because character of infinite worth or unworth is formed by it.

Now it is the Holy Spirit that teaches us all this. Paul says: "I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12 : 3). It is a fact that saints bless and sinners curse by the name of Jesus. They know that he is holy. Paul credits to the Holy Spirit this result and it is involved in the statements of Jesus.

*The Holy Spirit convicts the world "in respect of righteousness."* Jesus adds in explanation, "*Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more.*"

In the former statement, with which we have been dealing, the *sin* spoken of is the sin of the world. Here the *righteousness* spoken of is the righteousness of Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin and of Christ's righteousness. Their great sin arises from their not believing in Christ the "Holy and Righteous One," and they are, because of this fact, brought under conviction by the Holy Spirit. It was necessary, in discussing the sin of the world, to speak of the character of Christ—for they naturally stand in contrast and are evidently so placed by Jesus in the clause which we are studying—and we need not here repeat what has been said already.

We come to the two explanatory clauses, "*Because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more.*"

The second of these clauses is, it seems, only a continuation and completer expression of the thought of the first. It is the negative member of a parallelism, a form of expression frequently used by Jesus as reported by John. (Cf. John 3 : 20; 5 : 25; 6 : 39; 7 : 18; 8 : 12; 10 : 28.)

We limit our attention therefore to the first clause, "*Because I go to the Father.*" The thought is really a simple one. It is this: The resurrection and ascension of Jesus to the Father proves that he is righteous, that he is what he claimed to be, the Holy One of God, the Son of God. The disciples became vividly conscious of this truth on the day of Pentecost and from that time on proclaimed it. Peter proclaimed it on that day in his sermon and again and again. (Acts 2 : 31-36; 3 : 15-21; 4 : 10.) This was the great fact that converted Saul of Tarsus. The voice said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9 : 5; cf. 22 : 8). Notice the language. It is not "I am Christ," but "I am Jesus." It is the man, Jesus of Nazareth, that has been exalted to the right hand of God. This was enough for the arch-persecutor. Before this stupendous fact he surrendered all. Then it became his great

theme. (Acts 13 : 30, 34; 17 : 31; 26 : 8; Rom. 1 : 4; 1 Cor. 15 : 4.) As to these passages consider that the thought of the resurrection carries with it, in Paul's mind, the thought of the ascension.

The fact is that the world in part has been and is being convinced of this truth. All the saved are convinced of it and many more who do not act upon their conviction. For this result we are indebted to the potent agency of the Holy Spirit. Paul calls it a mystery: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness;

He who was manifest in the flesh,  
Justified in the spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3 : 16).

*The Holy Spirit convicts the world "in respect of judgment"; "of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged."*

In the light of what has been said, if we have spoken correctly, this part of the sentence is not difficult.

The "prince of this world" is Satan. (Cf. John 12 : 31 and 14 : 30.) "Hath been

judged" refers to the victory that Christ gained over Satan. Christ conquered the devil both in his life and in his death. He routed him in the great temptation. (Matt. 4 : 11.) He beat him and disrupted his kingdom when his disciples cast out demons. (Cf. Matt. 12 : 29; Luke 10 : 18.) The passage in Luke does not refer to the origin of Satan, as a fallen angel, as some suppose, but to his overthrow in the world, as the context shows.

But "hath been judged" refers especially, it seems, to the victory of Christ over Satan gained in his death on the cross. (Cf. John 12 : 31.) The perfect tense is used because Jesus views the event as an accomplished fact. The world was passing judgment on Jesus, but it also was being judged by the judgment it was meeting out. And Satan was being defeated by the crucifixion. Satan did not want Christ to go to the cross. When Peter would have prevented it, the Saviour called him Satan, for he was then speaking for Satan, who desired rather that Jesus fall down and worship him. (Matt. 16 : 23; cf. 4 : 9.) And when he was on the cross those who were Satanic would have been glad to have him come down without finishing his sacrifice. (Matt. 27 : 42.) When Jesus said, "It is finished," and died the victory over Satan's power, the last enemy,

death, was accomplished. By dying he conquered death. His resurrection was the demonstration of it.

The cross conquers the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In the cross Satan is revealed. His works and the world of which he is the prince are brought to light. Paul says that by the cross of Christ the world is crucified to him. (Gal. 6 : 14.)

Now, if the prince of the world is condemned, all that belong to his principedom are condemned also; and the Holy Spirit works this truth into their conscience. Sinful men will not escape the judgment of God; and more, where the gospel is preached, they will not escape the foreboding of their doom.

In conclusion, we notice that in all the work of the Holy Spirit Christ is honored. As the Son did not come into the world to glorify himself but the Father, so the Holy Spirit came not to glorify himself but the Son. Christ hung upon the cross; the Holy Spirit "hides behind the cross."

Julius Charles Hare well says:

The Comforter in every part of his threefold work glorifies Christ. In convincing of sin he convinces us of the sin of not believing on Christ. In convincing us of righteousness, he convinces us of the righteousness

of Christ, of that righteousness which was made manifest in Christ going to the Father, and which he received to bestow on all such as should believe on him. And lastly, in convincing of judgment, he convinces us that the prince of the world was judged in the life and by the death of Christ. Thus, throughout, Christ is glorified; and that which the Comforter shows to us relates in all its parts to the life and work of the incarnate Son of God.

We may say the same of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. When he enlightens, enlarges, strengthens, teaches, guides, inspires, and empowers them, it is that Christ may be glorified. Dr. A. J. Gordon beautifully says: <sup>2</sup>

When the sun retires beyond the horizon at night, the world, our hemisphere, sees him no more; yet the moon sees him, and all night long catches his light and throws it down upon us. So the world sees not Christ in the gracious provisions of redemption which he holds for us in heaven, but through the illumination of the Comforter the church sees him, . . . and communicates what it sees to the world.

Since this is the mind of the Spirit it should be our mind also. If we have it we have the Spirit. It is the best proof that we have the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> "Ministry of the Spirit," p. 198f.

Bismarck's one ambition was to Prussianize Germany. "You can hang me," he said, "so long as the rope you do it with binds Germany to the Prussian throne." A noble devotion that was to an ignoble cause. To Christianize Germany was Luther's devotion to a noble cause. And the name of Luther will be sung while the name of Bismarck will rot.

The Holy Spirit wants us to do what he himself is doing, namely, so to preach, teach, and exemplify Christ to unbelieving men that they will come to know his righteousness, their sinfulness, and the righteous judgment of God that now rests upon them and that will in time be executed upon them vividly before the whole universe.

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.





**V.**

**SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay,  
Though I have done thee such despite;  
Cast not a sinner quite away,  
Nor take thine everlasting flight.

Though I have most unfaithful been  
Of all who e'er thy grace received,  
Ten thousand times thy goodness seen,  
Ten thousand times thy goodness grieved;

Yet, O, the chief of sinners spare,  
In honor of my great High Priest;  
Nor, in thy righteous anger, swear  
I shall not see thy people's rest.

## SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

**I** USE the plural, *sins*, with design. I want to call attention to the fact that there are many sins against the Holy Spirit and not one only.

*We speak first of what is often called "the sin against the Holy Spirit."*

This is not the Bible expression for it. It is there called "*the blasphemy against the Spirit.*"

Let us have the account clearly in mind. It is in Matthew, Mark, and Luke:

### MATTHEW 12 : 22-37

"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges, But if I by the Spirit of

God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathered not with me scattereth. Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

### MARK 3 : 22-30

"And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons. And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan hath risen up against

himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. But no one can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

## LUKE 11 : 14-26

"And he was casting out a demon *that was dumb*. And it came to pass, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spake; and the multitudes marvelled. But some of them said, By Beelzebub the prince of the demons casteth he out demons. And others, trying *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. When the strong *man* fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. The unclean

spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

Now it is evident that Jesus attributes to the scribes and Pharisees, who accused him of casting out demons by "Beelzebub the prince of the demons," the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

In answering their charge Jesus first explains that their reasoning is unreasonable. Satan would not cast out Satan; or, if he did, his kingdom is divided and must come to an end. Then he proceeds to denounce them.

Let us go into the subject carefully and discover, if we can, what the nature of this sin is.

1. *It is a sin of bad men.*

They are hypocrites. Jesus calls them the "offspring of vipers." They are "corrupt." They are "guilty of an eternal sin," that "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." Their conscience is seared. They are not concerned with what is right, but only with what they can "get away with." They

will go to any length to compass the defeat of Jesus. Jesus has done a good miracle. They cannot deny the fact, but, nevertheless, they will manage to discredit him and the power by which he did it.

2. *It is a sin against knowledge.* There is the quality of deliberation in it. These Pharisees are wise in their wickedness. They know their duty, but to escape it they will go to the extreme of calling white black. To condemn Christ they will stultify themselves mentally, morally, and spiritually. There is no stopping them. (Cf. Matt. 21 : 25-27.)

There is a great difference between the judgments that will fall upon sins of ignorance and upon sins of knowledge. (Cf. Luke 12 : 47, 48.)

3. *It is a sin of speech.*

Blasphemy is evil-speaking. In this case it is the most wicked kind of speaking. It is maligning what is holy, what can be nothing other than holy, what is known to be only holy.

Bad thoughts are bad, but they are worse when let loose in words. There is a great difference between a bullet in the gun and a bullet fired out. There is a great difference between a sword in its scabbard and a sword that is being thrust in up to the hilt.

This sin, the greatest of all sins, is a sin ex-



pressed in words and getting a measure of its character by means of words. Words are of two kinds, meaningless and meaningful. If one must give an account of the former, much more must he of the latter. Notice that Jesus says in this connection: "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12 : 36, 37).

4. *This sin is one sin. It is not many sins combined, nor is it the repetition of a sin. It is not any one of a class of sins. It is the only one of its kind.*

I do not think that a very common explanation of this sin is correct. I give a sample. Dr. James Lyall says :

I was in the North of Ireland just before I left for the colonies, conducting services in one of the Presbyterian churches. On the first Sunday night of the mission a tall, fine-looking, elderly man came up to me and said, "Mr. Lyall, I would like to have a talk with you." I told him to come into the vestry. We went in, and he began the interview by saying: "I want in the first place to tell you who I am. I am an employer of labor in this city, and have hundreds of men on my pay-list. I am well known and have a measure of influence in my town. But it is not that I wanted to talk

about, but my spiritual condition." He went on to say something like this: "Three years ago I was deeply convicted of my need of Jesus Christ. One night I was in my room alone with God, an unsaved man. I was conscious of the divine presence as I am of your presence now. I knew God was in the room, and I knew in my inner consciousness that if I yielded to him that night I would be saved. I was just on the threshold of the kingdom, but I began to count the cost, and deliberately got up from my knees and walked out of that room, as conscious that I had left the presence of God as if I were to leave your presence now. About a year later God came to me again; the pleading of the Holy Spirit was overwhelming; the conviction of sin was appalling, and I felt that God was giving me another chance, but the devil came and whispered: 'Don't make a fool of yourself. You are already a good man, and everybody regards you as such: don't begin to let on as if you were not; the people will laugh at you.' I yielded to this subtle temptation of the devil and once more resisted the Holy Ghost. In a moment, when I had chosen, I was conscious, just as conscious as I am of your presence now, that I had resisted for the last time. I went out of God's presence banished even as Cain was banished from the divine presence."

Then he added, with a strange look in his eye that almost froze my blood: "Mr. Lyall, listen; standing before you tonight in this vestry is a lost soul. I believe I am as much lost tonight as I will ever be in hell, only I have not got there. I have walked the streets night after night. I have not slept a whole night for months. I would have plunged myself into Belfast Loch before this were it not for what lies be-

yond." Then he continued: "I have not told you this because I want you to help me. My dear sir, I am beyond all human help and divine, too. I want you to tell my story where you go, that men and women may be warned against the awful sin of resisting the Holy Ghost." He went out from the building and I never saw him again.

Rev. William A. Sunday, while preaching in his great revival in Kansas City, explained the "unpardonable sin" in about the same way.

Now, resisting the Holy Spirit is a great sin; and putting off the day of salvation is a great sin; and saying no to God, when one feels that it may be one's last chance, is a great sin. But none of these is "blasphemy against the Spirit," and it is this sin, and only this sin, that Jesus says will not be forgiven. Neither resisting the Holy Spirit nor hardening one's heart in the day of God's visitation, though they be greater sins than we think, is speaking wickedly of the Holy Spirit. And we have Jesus' word for it, in this very connection, that all such sins and any other sin, except this one sin of "blasphemy against the Spirit," may be forgiven. Jesus says: "Every sin and blasphemy (wicked-speaking) shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be for-

given him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him; neither in this world, nor in that which is to come" (Matt. 12 : 31, 32).

There is hardly a point of similarity between the case Doctor Lyall cites and the case Jesus is talking about. There is, in fact, some evidence, in what the poor fellow said to Doctor Lyall, that he had not committed the unpardonable sin; for he desired others to be warned. He was concerned about their salvation. Henry Ward Beecher said: "No man need fear that he has committed the unpardonable sin who is deeply alarmed and anxious about it; for the very nature of that sin is moral insensibility."

There are many sins which, if continued and persisted in, cause one to be lost. Rejecting Christ, abiding in unbelief, procrastination until the last opportunity slips away, any act or failure to act that leaves one in his sins, until the black messenger of death calls, causes one to be lost. But it is evident that Jesus is talking about a sin that has in itself a fatal quality. One who commits it is "guilty of an eternal sin," he says. Some sins are fatal because they are repeated until one uses up his "day of grace," but not because they have in themselves a fatal and final quality. For example, one could put off from

day to day planting his crop until the season is past and it is impossible for him to gather in a harvest. But we can think of it being possible for one to go out into his field and curse the soil and to render it barren for all time. It needs to be done but once. When it is first done it is finally done. So is this blasphemy against the Spirit. It is a terrible, damning sin.

What, more definitely, is this sin? What kind of evil-speaking is it? How is it that one can be forgiven if he speaks against the Son but not if he speaks against the Holy Spirit? These are questions on which we should think carefully.

We do not believe that any judgment of God is arbitrary. If a sin is unpardonable, it is not because God is limited in love and mercy. The Holy Spirit is not more holy than the Son is. There is, therefore, something in this sin that affects the blasphemer and renders him hopelessly wicked, as there is not in speaking against Christ. This sin was directed against Christ, but this fact did not give to it its blackest quality. Its blackest quality was that it maligned, slandered, and traduced the Holy Spirit. Jesus worked a miracle by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees said he did it by Beelzebub, the chief of evil spirits, or Satan. In Mark we have the explanatory statement, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Their sin was simply this: They identified a good spirit with an evil spirit, the Holy Spirit with the devil. They called white black. Some persons are partially color-blind. They cannot distinguish shades of green and blue. But if one were so color-blind that he could not tell white from black, he would be totally blind. And suppose he could by speaking the word render himself thus unable to tell white from black. He would be as blind as one without eyes.

Now these Pharisees did this thing to themselves morally and spiritually. They made themselves hopeless as to salvation. Before death they determined for themselves their own doom. They decided for themselves, before their day of probation was ended, their eternal destiny. They chose it. They willed it. By one act they made themselves incapable of repentance and fit only for perdition. Like Judas, now they must go to "their own place." They committed soul-suicide. They took their soul in their own hand and threw it into hell. Such is man's moral sovereignty over himself. Such is the nature of this terrible sin of wicked thoughts expressed in words.

Prince Karl Lichnowsky, German Ambassador to England at the outbreak of the war in 1914, says that he, in supporting Berlin's policy, com-

mitted "a sin against the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> It is not clear what he means, but it is true that the German rulers did politically what the Pharisees in their day did religiously. To justify what they did, they defended the breaking of national agreements, proclaimed that might is right, that a nation is not accountable to the moral law, and praised anything and everything that ministered to their vicious and degenerate purpose. This was in a political sense, if I may so speak, the sin against the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to trust such men. President Wilson did a courageous thing, but a thing which the conscience of the world requires, when he proclaimed, long before that band of conspirators against the civilization and peace of the world began to show signs of weakening, that no terms of peace would be discussed with them, that they were not even to be treated with. He was simply taking them at their own word. They have, in the eyes of the world, committed an unpardonable political crime. It will never be forgiven by men.

It may be asked, Can this sin be committed now? I heard a teacher of note reason in this way: When the Pharisees committed this sin Jesus was present and had just worked a miracle which they could not deny. These conditions not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "My Mission to London," p. 39.

existing now this sin may not be possible now. But in 1 John 5 : 16, 17 we read: "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." It was, therefore, possible to commit the unpardonable sin, when the apostle John wrote this epistle, fifty years or more after the ascension. If it was possible to commit it half a century after Jesus was on earth, I see no reason why it may not be possible to commit it nineteen centuries after.

Is this sin committed often? What are examples of it?

I do not believe that it is what it is commonly supposed to be, as has been said, but I believe that it is committed oftener than it is commonly supposed to be. John's language suggests that it is not an infrequent occurrence.

Robert Louis Stevenson describes, in his weird story, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the contest that rages within between the higher and the lower self. Doctor Jekyll, a noble and gifted physician, discovers and compounds in his laboratory a drug that transforms him into a base and despicable demon of a man, known as



Mr. Hyde. The oftener he takes the drug, the stronger Mr. Hyde grows and the weaker Doctor Jekyll becomes. Finally Doctor Jekyll ceases to exist, and there is Mr. Hyde only. Stevenson was not picturing in this, his greatest work, a rare character. He is interpreting life. They are not few who transform themselves from Doctor Jekyll into Mr. Hyde; "who say to the worm, Thou art my sister." They say good-bye to the good and welcome to the bad. They take the fatal plunge and put to death the better self. They kill their conscience. They want it so. They make it so. It is so. It is eternally so.

*The sin of tempting the Holy Spirit.*

This was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter said: "How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5 : 9).

Their sin was something more than miserliness. If every miser was turned into a corpse, the undertakers would have a thriving business. Their sin was something more than lying. If lightning should strike every liar, the population of the world would be greatly reduced. These sins are bad, but the sin of Ananias and Sapphira must have been something desperately wicked. The language of Peter revealed it. They "agreed together" to do the deed. Peter said to Ananias:

“Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

I see behind the scenes a plot not only to discredit the benevolence of the church in Jerusalem, but also to ridicule the Holy Spirit by whose power so many wonderful things, since the day of Pentecost, were being done, and by whose gracious agency they were stirred to so great benevolence.

*The sin of resisting the Holy Spirit.*

It was a long while before I came to understand the great speech of Stephen. But finally I found the key to it in this statement near the end of it: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7 : 51).

Looking through the address with this as a leading thought I saw that Stephen cites examples of how the Israelites resisted God and his Spirit. God began with Abraham to create a people for himself and to call them to higher things. He sent Moses to them to begin definitely to realize for them the promises to the patriarchs. Moses led them out of Egypt and at Sinai God gave them a revelation of himself in the commandments and in other ways. But they made a golden calf and lapsed into idolatry. Into

idolatry again they fell after they had settled in the Promised Land, and God for punishment sent them into captivity to Babylon. Solomon built the temple, but he and the prophets explained that God is greater than the temple. (Cf. 1 Kings 8 : 27; Isa. 66 : 1f.) The worship of images was burned out of the Jews by the fires of the exile. There they got their system rid of that crude kind of idolatry. But idolatry of another kind is in them yet, namely, an overreverence for the temple. For the sake of that building they would put Christ to death and will now take the life of Stephen. Murderers they are and idolaters, worshipping brick and stone and a spot of ground rather than the true and living God. The spiritual God as revealed in Jesus Christ they refused, and now the Holy Spirit, who calls them out of their narrowness, littleness, and hardness, they resist. The day of Pentecost means nothing to such brutish religionists. They are idolaters. They are joined to their idol.

It is no wonder that God hates idolatry. It is a caricaturing of his character. It is more; it is cartooning the Almighty. But he who resists the Holy Spirit and rejects God's spiritual kingdom, is an idolater. He may be many degrees above the fetish worshiper, but he is of the same class. Resisting the Holy Spirit is a great sin,

The three sins which we have been discussing are sins committed by unsaved people. We come now to speak of two sins against the Holy Spirit which are committed by Christians:

*The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit.*

Paul says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4 : 30; cf. Isa. 63 : 10). The meaning is this: Do not cause sorrow to the Holy Spirit. The same Greek word with a strengthening prefix is used of Jesus: "And when he had looked round about on them in anger, *being grieved* at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand" (Mark 3 : 5). It is used of Peter: "Peter was *grieved* because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" (John 21 : 17.) Paul uses it of the Corinthians and of himself: "But if any hath *caused sorrow*, he hath *caused sorrow*, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all" (2 Cor. 2 : 5).

Paul's conception of the Holy Spirit as capable of grief or sorrow is proof of his personality. What is inanimate and impersonal cannot have sorrow. The Holy Spirit can be disappointed, wounded, because he has will, feeling, honor.

His relation to us is that of a friend. If we disappoint him he is a wounded friend, but a

faithful friend still, never an offended and estranged friend. We should appreciate and be sensitive to our side of this relation. As Christian character may be known by its responsiveness to the wish of Christ, so it is revealed also by its responsiveness to the mind of the Spirit.

*The sin of quenching the Holy Spirit.*

Paul commands, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5 : 19). The Greek word is well translated by "quench." It occurs several times in the New Testament. (Cf. Matt. 12 : 20; 25 : 8; Mark 9 : 48; Eph. 6 : 16; Heb. 11 : 34.) The Greek adjective translated "unquenchable" is made from the same stem with the negative prefix. (Cf. Matt. 3 : 12; Mark 9 : 43; Luke 3 : 17.) In all these eight examples the thought is the ceasing, the causing to cease, the extinguishing, of fire, as in the case of the snuffing out or the dying out of the flame of a lamp.

Paul's thought is that the Holy Spirit prompts to action; he flames up within; he is a holy fire initiating thought, life, and action. Do not suppress, do not stifle, do not choke out this divine flame. Notice that in the next sentence Paul says, "Despise not prophesying" (or preaching), an elemental quality of which is spontaneousness.

This power of the Holy Spirit to cause the believer in whom he dwells to be moved by a holy

impulse, to originate in him a new purpose, to cause him to "take the initiative," is a vital quality.

It is the secret of Christianity's mastery over environment. The gospel cannot be "caged and tamed." It will "break through." It is an explosive that will be liberated. It is like life in springtime that throws off the dead leaves of winter, that sheds the dead skin of the dead past and clothes itself with a new dress for a new day. Buddhism and Mohammedanism and all pagan religions lack this vital quality; and therefore cannot adapt themselves to new conditions. They become antiquated. They are buried in the rubbish of time. Christianity is not bound by custom or conventionality or institutions. It is never out of date. It has the power of adaptation and adjustment. It creates for itself conditions and ages. It has this power because it has the Spirit of life. The breath of God is in it. Paul says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—liberty to understand to speak, to do. (Cf. 2 Cor. 3 : 17.)

And Christianity does all this because the Holy Spirit stirs men to take the initiative. The Holy Spirit said to the Church in Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13 : 2). Then fol-

lowed missionary campaigns that revolutionized the world and whose influence still operates with accumulating force.

Every great movement, missionary, evangelistic, educational, or reformatory, that has blessed the world and advanced the kingdom of God, has originated in the same way. It was born in the heart of some Spirit-filled and Spirit-led servant of God. Carey, Judson, Moody, Wesley, Finney, Spurgeon, Broadus, Luther, Knox rise before us as we think on these things. Did institutions make these men? No, but they made institutions. Were they the product of their day and age? No, they gave rise to new and better days. God took them into cooperation with himself in creating the world anew. The Holy Spirit in them made them *creators* together with God. They were divine artists, not representing history, but making history; not painting, but creating; not imitating, but originating.

The Holy Spirit begets a genius for achievement, progress, and leadership, which is, in the kingdom, what the spirit of invention and originality is in the world of affairs. It is business wisdom to encourage the latter; it is kingdom wisdom to encourage the former. It is sin and stagnation to suppress either. There must be room in the church for the initiative of the Spirit.

Paul points out to the church of Corinth that God is the God of order and not of confusion (1 Cor. 14 : 33), but in that very connection he directs that in a meeting of the church, when one is speaking, a brother to whom a revelation is made must have the privilege to *break in* and make known his message from the Spirit. Human arrangements should be made subject to possible disarrangement by the Spirit. The Spirit must rule in the church. If not, progress ceases.

It is the Spirit that calls men into the ministry. If they do not heed his call, "all the voyage of their lives will be bound in shallows and in miseries." It is the Spirit that calls laymen into fields of special usefulness. If they do not respond, the springs of their lives will dry up, withered as by the drought of summer. It is the Spirit that gives us all visions of what we are to be and to do. If we, like Paul, are obedient to these heavenly visions, we shall, like him also, run and finish our course with joy.

God works from personal centers out. A Christian filled with the Spirit is God's dynamo radiating divine power. The size of the circumference of his influence is determined by the will of God only.

Carlyle says that Puritanism came on the Mayflower to New England from England, and that



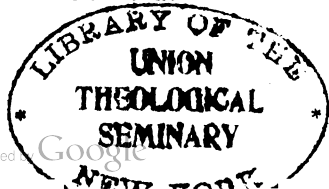
England got it from Scotland, and that Scotland got it from John Knox, and that it originated in the heart of John Knox. At the age of forty he was a member of the body of Reformers, a priest attending to his duties, modest and unknown except by a little circle of friends of the same faith. One day at the close of his sermon in the chapel, the preacher called upon Mr. Knox to speak the thoughts that he and the congregation felt were in him. He tried to speak, but could not. He "burst into a flood of tears," says Carlyle, "and ran out." But the fire was smoldering within him, and it was not long until it broke forth in a mighty flame, and John Knox not only spoke, but acted and led and created a new Scotland, a "resurrection as from death." He started a movement that went to England and came to America and is now sweeping back to Europe and around the world. In speaking of America's part in the World War and of the victory of the Allies, an Englishman in London said, "After nearly three hundred years at last the Mayflower has returned home." Let us not forget that this world movement to liberty, democracy, and peace began in the soul of one man that let God have his way with him and whom the Spirit of God stirred up, *fired up*.

That is a good expression, "The Spirit moved

him." Some Christians are, if I may so speak, like the old Ford automobile. They have to be "cranked" before they can get themselves going. But some have a "self-starter." The Spirit of the living God is in them. They are the leaders, the teachers, the preachers, the missionaries, the prophets, the evangelists, the thinkers, the sufferers, the martyrs, the givers, the doers, the inspirers of their fellow Christians.

Nothing can quench the Spirit of God unless the possessor of the Spirit permits it, wills it so. Persecution cannot do it. Limitations cannot do it. Bunyan's Pilgrim saw a fire burning against a wall and, despite the buckets of water thrown on it, the flames leaped up higher and hotter. Then it was explained to him that the fire was fed by oil supplied by a man unseen behind the wall; that the man that poured on the water was the devil and the man that supplied the oil was Christ. Christ's reservoir of oil is greater than the devil's reservoir of water. If only we will let Christ supply the oil, the fire will continue to burn, and no power can quench it.

It is, I say, a sin, a great sin, to quench this holy fire of God within us. He who does it suppresses the flame of life. He puts a damper upon, he retards, if he does not blast as with the frost of winter, the very life of God that is in



him. There was a voice that said: "Sit down young man! When God wants the heathen saved he will do it without your help or mine." It was a voice from Hades, though spoken, it may be, by Christian lips. But Carey did not heed it. In his heart he must have said, as Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" And Carey became the greatest missionary since Paul.

**"QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT."**

## **VI**

### **THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**H**

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after thy will,  
While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Search me and try me, Master, today  
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,  
As in thy presence humbly I bow.

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!  
Power—all power—surely is thine!  
Teach me and heal me, Saviour divine!

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.

## THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**I**F we express in one word the ministry of the Spirit to men of the world, that word is *conviction*. (Cf. John 16 : 8-11.) If we express in one word the ministry of the Spirit to believers, that word is *power*.

“Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1 : 8).

“God gave us not the Spirit of fearfulness; but of power” (2 Tim. 1 : 7).

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4 : 6).

“Greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto the Father” (John 14 : 12).

“It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you” (John 16 : 7).

“The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (1 Cor. 4 : 20).

*There are many kinds of power.* God can use any of them and all of them when he wills and as he wills.

There is *physical power*. God has at times

used it. He used the animal strength of Samson and the athletic skill of David. The world admires this kind of power. But God's people must not trust much in it. Elijah used force on Mt. Carmel and slew the prophets of Baal, but God taught him in Horeb by the "still small voice" the lesson of gentleness.

There is *financial power*. It is the world's god. It is our God's instrument. He uses it, but he values it only lightly. He can do without it. Peter said to the lame man: "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee" (Acts 3 : 6). Then he gave him power to walk and earn his own living—something infinitely better than money. Since the world worships money, God has very little use for it.

There is *intellectual power*. The world worships at this shrine also. "Knowledge is power," it says. It builds its educational institutions, bestows its degrees, and sends forth its sons to conquer.

God uses knowledge. He hates it when it is exalted overmuch. He despises the worldly brand of knowledge. But true knowledge, the really scientific kind, he uses and has always used it. In fact, we may say that it is indispensable to his method. Look and see if you can find where God ever made use of fools and idiots.

No, he uses men of wisdom. And if they have it not when he calls them, they acquire it in his great school.

God thinks little of matter and money and much of mind. But he does not give it the first place, nor the second, nor the third. It has a subordinate rank, fourth place or yet lower.

It was not intellectual power or insight that Jesus promised to the waiting disciples.

There is also *moral power or influence*.

Pure and simple goodness is beautiful to behold, and it has its victories too. The world praises it and throws its bouquets at the honest and benevolent man, and sometimes elects him to office.

And this kind of men God also honors. He values them so highly that he will have no other kind to do his work. It is said that a thirsty man will drink as readily out of a tin can as a golden goblet. But decent people demand that the can be clean. Dishonest men, stingy men, selfish men, God will dump out on the rubbish-heap.

But something more is needed than simple goodness. Jesus did not tell the disciples that they would become good on the day of Pentecost. Mere goodness will not convert the world. It is goodness plus something that converts the world.



There is another kind of power. It is not any one of the four I have mentioned, nor is it all of these combined. It is something other and more heavenly, more divine, more mysterious than these. It is *spiritual power*, or it is the *power of the Spirit of God*. The other kinds of power are human; their source is men. This fifth kind is divine; its source is God. Its existence proves the presence of God. It comes down from above. Its nature is mysterious, but its effect is as obvious as the sound of the wind.

The power of the Spirit is the ability so to live and witness for Christ that men will believe on him. "Ye shall receive power," Jesus said. Power for what? Power to bring in the kingdom. Power to cause men to repent and believe.

There is a great difference between Christians in the matter of their effectiveness as soul-winners. Here are two persons who are equally well educated and are equally good and worthy in character. But one wins many souls; the other, few or none. It is said that Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11 : 24). His goodness did not explain his usefulness. It was his goodness plus his faith and his spiritual fulness that explained it.

Many questions of vital interest press for an answer :

Is the power of the Spirit intended for all Christians or for only a limited number?

If for all Christians, does the Holy Spirit come upon them when they become Christians or at a later time?

Is there a distinct experience of equipment for service for every believer comparable with the experience of regeneration?

Is there a Pentecostal experience as well as Pentecostal power for every Christian?

May one have the grace of the Holy Spirit that saves and sanctifies him and not the power of the Holy Spirit that qualifies him for service?

Is the receiving of the Holy Spirit in power for service a momentary act or a gradual process?

Are we to expect now as proof of the coming and presence of the Holy Spirit any miraculous manifestations?

If it is the privilege of every Christian to have the power of the Holy Spirit for service, or increased power for increasing service, should we not be earnestly seeking for it and righteously living that we may possess it?

We shall try to answer these leading questions as carefully and as simply as possible.

As a preparatory step we should consider that *the laws of the Spirit are like the laws of life*. Some are easily discerned and some are subtle

and evade any analysis that we are capable of. We do not apply mechanical rules to life, and we should not attempt to limit the Spirit of God by such rules.

1. *My first simple proposition is that the power of the Spirit is intended for all Christians.*

“I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh ” (Acts 2 : 17).

“For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him ” (Acts 2 : 39).

“He shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever ” (John 14 : 16). The power of the Holy Spirit was not for the apostles and their generation alone, but for us as well.

2. *My second simple proposition is that, while the Holy Spirit comes to every believer to regenerate him and is in his life to sanctify him, he is not, by virtue of this fact, in every Christian to give him power for effective witnessing.*

This is the meaning of Pentecost. The disciples had the Holy Spirit in the former sense before that day. The Samaritans believed and were baptized; they were true disciples and were born of the Spirit before they received the power of the Spirit. (Acts 8 : 14ff.) Paul tells the Galatians that they began the Christian life in the

Spirit, but are failing to walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 3 : 2, 3, 14; 5 : 25.)

The life of Jesus teaches us the same truth. When he was baptized the Holy Spirit descended upon him. (Luke 3 : 22.) But surely it is not to be supposed that he was without the Spirit in some sense before this; but that now the Spirit has come to fill and fit him for his ministry. (Cf. Matt. 4 : 1; Luke 3 : 23; 4 : 1, 14, 18.)

3. *My third simple proposition is that the Holy Spirit may come to one to save him and to fit him for service at different times, or to do both at the same time.*

The cases already dealt with prove the first part of the proposition and need not be reviewed again. The experience of Paul, if he was saved on the way to Damascus, which seems to be the fact, and not later, when the scales fell from his eyes and he received the Holy Spirit, points in the same direction. (Acts 9 : 5, 17-19; cf. 1 Cor. 12 : 3.) But the interval between the two events was brief. His conversion and his being filled with the Spirit were the beginning and the completion of one revolutionary experience.

The case of Cornelius, however, proves conclusively the second part of the proposition. Cornelius and the other believers in his house were saved and received the power of the Holy Spirit

at the same time. (Acts 10 : 44-48; cf. 11 : 14.)

The fact that John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit" from his birth is also a proof of it. (Luke 1 : 15.)

To hold that some time must elapse between conversion and the receiving of the power of the Spirit, as some able writers have done, seems contrary to the Scriptures; though most of the cases in them are of this kind.<sup>1</sup>

*4. My fourth simple proposition is that we cannot determine the way in which the power of the Holy Spirit may come upon one by any external, physical, or conventional consideration or limitation.*

The Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is sovereign. He does as he wills to. As we cannot prescribe mechanical rules for his process in producing the new birth, so we cannot do this for his manner of administering power.

He came on some by the laying on of the apostle's hands. (Acts 8 : 17; 19 : 6.) On Paul he came by the laying on of the hands of Ananias. (Acts 9 : 17.) On some he came without the laying on of the hands of any one. (Acts 2 : 1-4; 10 : 44.) In most cases he came upon the disciples after baptism. (Acts 2 : 4; 8 : 16, 17; 19 :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Ministry of the Spirit," p. 77.

5, 6.) But in one case, and probably a second, they received the power of the Holy Spirit before baptism. (Acts 10 : 47; 9 : 17, 18.)

By his very nature the Spirit is not subject to limitations of this kind. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3 : 17).

*When the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon Christians, there may be miraculous manifestations, and there may not be.*

There were miraculous manifestations when he came upon Jesus at his baptism; when he came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost; and when he came upon those that believed in Cæsarea. But that was the age of miracles. And there were many cases of individuals and churches having the power of the Spirit, concerning whom there is no mention of miracles when they received it. It is so in the experience of regeneration. In Paul's conversion there was miracle. In the conversion of Zacchæus there was not. This age is not an age of miracles, and we should expect no miraculous manifestations either in conversion or in the induement of power. Seek not for miracles, but for power. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 12 : 39)

Again I say there are no stereotyped rules for the Holy Spirit's action. He breaks through

all external, physical, and conventional boundaries. He destroys all "forms of godliness," for he is the "power thereof." Power creates its own processes and channels of expression. The Spirit who gives freedom to believers is himself free.

*5. My fifth simple proposition is that the endowment of the Spirit for service may be an instantaneous experience, or it may be a gradual process.*

In the experience of salvation the Holy Spirit comes at once to dwell in the believer. In many instances in the New Testament he came also all at once to give power for service, as on the day of Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius and other occasions already discussed.

Does he come thus instantaneously now? Who would deny it?

D. L. Moody spoke once at Northfield of his own experience thus:

This blessing came upon me suddenly—like a flash of lightning. For months I had been hungering and thirsting for power in service. I had come to that point that I think I would have died if I had not got it. I remember I was walking in the streets of New York. I had no more heart in the business I was about than if I had not belonged to this world at all. Right there on the street the power of God seemed to come upon me. I was filled with a sense of God's goodness and

felt as though I could take the whole world to my heart. I took the old sermon that I had preached before without any power; it was the same old truth, but there was a new power. Many were impressed and converted. This happened years after I was converted myself. It was in the fall of 1871. I had been very anxious to have a large Sunday school and a large congregation, but there were few conversions. I remember I used to take pride in having the largest congregation in Chicago on a Sunday night. Two godly women used to come and hear me. One of them came to me one night after I had preached very satisfactorily as I thought. I fancied she was going to congratulate me on my success, but she said, "We are praying for you." I wondered if I had made some blunder that they talked that way. Next Sunday night they were there again, evidently in prayer while I was preaching. One of them said, "We are still praying for you." I could not understand it, and said: "Praying for me! Why don't you pray for the people? I am all right." "Ah," they said, "you are not all right. You have not got power; there is something lacking, but God can qualify you." I did not like it at first, but I got to thinking it over, and after a little time I began to feel a desire to have what they were praying for. They continued to pray for me, and the result was that at the end of three months God sent this blessing on me. I would not for the whole world go back to where I was before 1871. Since then I have never lost the assurance that I am walking in communion with God, and I have a joy in his service that sustains me and makes it easy work. I believe I was an older man then than I am now; and I have been growing ever



since. I used to be very tired when preaching three times a week; now I can preach the gospel five times a day and never get tired at all. I have done three times the work I did before, and it gets better and better every year. It is so easy to do a thing when love prompts you. It would be better, it seems to me, to go and break stones than to take to preaching in a professional spirit. A man can accomplish more in one year with this power than he can do in forty years without it. Jonathan Edwards said he was able to do more in Northampton in one week than he did in seven years before the Spirit of God came upon him for service.

I cite this experience of Mr. Moody because it is clearly stated, and because we all count him a sincere and practical Christian. He was not "flighty," and he was not given to claiming too much for himself. He had a large fund of common sense and splendid poise of mind.

Mr. Moody's experience in its main features is duplicated in the lives of many men of our day.

But many men of spiritual power and great usefulness do not have such an experience to relate. I have not heard nor read of such an experience in the lives of John A. Broadus, Adoniram Judson, C. H. Spurgeon, and W. A. Sunday. These men, it seems, did not have the experience, but they had the power, which is the essential thing.

*6. My sixth simple proposition is that the power of the Holy Spirit for service comes upon Christians in proportion as they desire it, appropriate it by faith, and are worthy of it.*

It is the will of Christ that his people, all of them, have power. "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Holy Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive" (John 7 : 37-39).

I do not mean that we can merit the power of God or any grace from him; but that we must so live as to be trustworthy of his gift. Certainly the Spirit of power, who is also the Spirit of holiness, will not come upon unholy, selfish, and worldly-minded Christians.

This blessing comes to those who keep the commandments of Christ. (Acts 5 : 32.) Rebels have no part in the Holy Spirit, nor have they who are impractical and spend their time "gazing into heaven" (Acts 1 : 11). The disciples were found doing what Jesus told them to do when the power came upon them. Had they stayed on the Mount of Olives they would have missed it.

Nor will the power of the Holy Spirit come to those who do not desire it. This gift of God must be prized and sought for as other blessings of grace are. So the Holy Spirit comes by prayer. He came on the Samaritans as a result of the prayer of others for them. (Acts 8 : 15.) But he will come to those who ask for the Holy Spirit for themselves. (Luke 11 : 13.)

I hold that to every Christian the power of the Holy Spirit is given *by measure*. To Jesus he was given without measure or limitation. (Cf. John 3 : 34.) But all imperfect followers of Jesus have this power with limitation. As Godet well says, "Man is a vessel destined to receive God, a vessel which must be enlarged in proportion as it is filled, and filled in proportion as it is enlarged."

In harmony with this view is Paul's exhortation to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5 : 18). As our love may be meager or abundant, so our supply of the Spirit may range from the minimum to the maximum.

The degree of the power of the Spirit that the Christian possesses depends upon himself. God's will is to fill him according to his desire, consecration, and capacity. God's reservoir of power is stored up for his use. He can have it if he wills to have it.

By this I do not mean that he by striving, or by his own power, can bring down this gift of God; for it is received by faith. By faith we receive his new birth and by faith we receive his power. (Cf. Gal. 3 : 2, 14.) We do not *get* the Holy Spirit; we *receive* the Holy Spirit.

It is not by a mere willing or a mere saying, "Lord fill me," that one can obtain this gift of God. Some seem to think it is, "*Presto, I have the power of the Spirit.*" But spiritual power does not come by a *slight-of-mind* performance. There is no "little secret" to right living and effectual witnessing. *The laws of the Spirit are the laws of life.* Life has many secrets, but no tricks. Simon the sorcerer could not buy the power of the Spirit, nor can any one steal it or get it by stealth. *God gives it.* But he gives it to whom he will and to him who is worthy and *as he is worthy.*

Spirit-filled workers is the great need in our day as it has ever been. Mighty courage, mighty utterances, and mighty deeds have characterized such servants of God. When they are described as "filled with the Holy Spirit," we may look for something wonderful to happen. (Cf. Acts 4 : 8, 31; 6 : 3; 7 : 55; 9 : 17; 13 : 9.)

Mr. John R. Mott thus expresses the challenge of our day and hour:

# I

When I made my first journey around the world I went home and wrote a book in which I laid great stress upon the need of an increase in the number of foreign missionaries. When I returned from my second tour I laid stress upon the need of a great army of native workers, sons and daughters of the soil. When I came back from my third extended journey to the East I was led to see that I had taken a very superficial view. What we need is not so much an increase in the number of missionaries, not so much a vast army of native workers; what we need is the discovery of the hiding of God's power and the secret of the releasing of that power. We need more workers through whom God shall have his opportunity."

Dr. A. J. Gordon thus illustrates the inheritance of spiritual power that has become ours by the ascension of Jesus:

My children, I have provided well for your needs; but your condition is one of poverty compared with what it may become. By the death of a kinsman in my native country I have become heir to an immense estate. If you will only submit cheerfully to my leaving you and crossing the sea and entering into my inheritance, I will send you back a thousand times more than you could have by my remaining with you.

Dr. Cortland Myers thus illustrates the privilege that is ours of utilizing God's dynamo of spiritual power:

Bent with age, weak, and almost helpless, she stands at the corner of the street. The steel tracks and copper wires stretch out in front of her. She watches for the car. It comes in sight and rushes through the street, pushed on by an unseen force. She can have no relation to that; it has apparently no relation to her, only to frighten her or make her marvel at the mystery. This is not true. She walks out toward the fast-moving wonder of our modern age and lifts her feeble old hand, and instantly the car stops. She expected it to stop. What! An old, crippled woman stop an electric-car! Certainly. The whole mechanism of that system of trolley-cars was built for her and around her. She has been dealing with one of the most stupendous forces in Gods great world and made it a part of her life. Understand it? No. Use it? Yes. She steps in the car, and in comfort and almost an incredibly short space of time she has arrived at her destination, then lifts her finger, and the world of electricity is at her command. She has accomplished all this in the presence of a great mystery and without a sneer from the scientific world. Transfer this to the prayer world and give the old saint her chance.

Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11 : 24). "Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5 : 18).



## **VII**

### **THE HOLY TRINITY**



Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy  
sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,  
Who wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Tho' the darkness hide thee,  
Tho' the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,  
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee  
Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and  
sky, and sea;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

## THE HOLY TRINITY

**A** FEW things should be said briefly concerning the subject of the Trinity. It is often thought of and treated as a philosophic doctrine; but there is none also more vital and practical. It is a touchstone of orthodoxy or heresy.

1. The doctrine of the Trinity should not be considered a contradiction in terms. As the word indicates, it is the doctrine of a three-oneness, that God is both three and one. But it does not mean that God is three and one in the same sense. This would be unreasonable. We are never called on to believe what contradicts reason, though we must often in both science and religion believe what transcends reason; and it is most reasonable to do this. He who will not do this closes to himself the door of knowledge.

2. That there is only one true God is the voice of revelation, the conclusion of reason, and the logic of history and human progress. Belief in many gods weakens nations politically and society morally. More than three thousand years ago Moses thundered forth this truth, as the first principle in the constitution of the religious and

political state he was founding: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

3. But the unity of God does not exclude personal distinctions within the divine being and nature. Denying a multiplicity of gods is not denying the multiplexity or complexity of the one true God. The absolute simplicity of the divine being was a theory of Spinoza and is fundamental in his absolute pantheism. It is a dark and deadly doctrine. Plurality within the unity of God is implied in the Old Testament revelations. (Cf. Gen. 1 : 26; 3 : 22; Isa. 6 : 8.)

4. Imperfect illustrations in nature of the divine Trinity abound: as the three branches of a tree that unite in one trunk—they are both three and one; the one human being that has a physical nature, an intellectual nature and a moral nature; the one government of the United States with its legislative, judicial, and executive departments; the one object in space with three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness; the one human mind with three faculties, feeling, knowledge, and will. And in the one faculty of knowledge itself, there are three elements, the knowing subject, the object known, and the act of knowing, or, as it has been expressed concisely in philosophic terms, all knowledge involves, or combines, or is, intellect, intelligible, and intelligence. But

all illustrations of the Trinity come short of presenting a satisfactory statement.

5. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one in essence and nature. They think the same, they will the same. They exist and act in perfect harmony. Being perfect their mutual love is perfect. Discord between them is impossible. In them there is naught but unity in plan and purpose. This oneness of thought and life is grounded in oneness of nature and essence. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God.

A spiritual person cannot read his Bible without feeling that the deity of the Holy Spirit is in its very breath. It is in the baptismal formula of Matthew. (Matt. 28 : 19.) It is in the oft-repeated Pauline benediction. (2 Cor. 13 : 14.) Every conception of the Holy Spirit presented in the Bible calls for adoration and worship. Divine power proceeds from him; divine attributes are ascribed to him; divine offices and honors are assigned to him. All this is there, implicit in thought, if not explicit in words.

6. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three in person. These names present personal distinctions. The Father is a person, the Son is a person, the Holy Spirit is a person.

It matters not that the word "person" is not

found in the Bible. It matters not what its origin was, savory or unsavory. It is a good word now and expresses the truth we find revealed there. One's orthodoxy or heterodoxy may be detected by his stand or failure to stand here. It is hotly contested ground, but it is holy ground. The distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not temporal, but eternal. They are not manifestations merely of one God; they are the internal, eternal, and personal distinctions within the being of one God. The Father speaks to the Son; the Son to the Father; they send the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit guides and glorifies the Son, and makes intercession to the Father. Let no one say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is simply God revealing himself in three ways. This is not the truth.

It is readily admitted, however, that the word person may not express all the truth. It is but an illustration, an attempt to understand the divine nature by analogy to human nature, and though there is more truth in this than in any other illustration or analogy, it also falls short. Divine personality transcends human personality. Our ladder reaches up into the nature of God, but not to the summit of his nature.

7. It seems proper to say that the persons of the Trinity, though equal in essence and charac-

ter, are of unequal rank in position and office. This is possible. It is, to be sure, the fact in an ideal home. The father and son are one in flesh and spirit and name. To make one inferior is to dishonor the other. And yet the father commands and the son obeys.

So the Son of God obeys his Father, though equal with him. In the garden he said, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22 : 42). Paul says that at the end of the world the Son will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. (1 Cor. 15 : 24.) And yet all should "honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (John 5 : 23). Father and son are correlative terms and suggest both equality of nature and inequality of rank and position.

By the same process of reasoning we conclude that the Holy Spirit is both equal to and subordinate to the Father and the Son. He is sent to minister to Christians by the Father and the Son. (John 14 : 26; 15 : 26.) He glorifies the Son. He prays to the Father. But he receives equal honors with them. His name, that is, his nature and character, is on a par with theirs. (Cf. Matt. 28 : 19; 2 Cor. 13 : 14.)

8. It does not seem possible to classify very distinctly the works of grace as attributable exclusively to the different divine persons. For ex-

ample, it is often said that our redemption is the work of Christ and our sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit. But Christ has a part also in our sanctification, and certainly the Father has a part in our redemption. (Cf. John 3 : 16.) It is said that "Christ is our advocate in heaven, the Holy Spirit is our advocate in the soul." But the Holy Spirit is our advocate in heaven also. (Cf. Rom. 8 : 26, 27.) It is said that creating is the work of the Father, saving the work of the Son, and perfecting the work of the Holy Spirit. But both the Son and the Holy Spirit were also active in the creation of the world. (Cf. Gen. 1 : 2; John 1 : 3.) The Father also is active in the salvation of the soul. (Cf. 1 John 3 : 9; 4 : 7; 5 : 1.) The Son also is active in perfecting the Christian. (Cf. Phil. 1 : 6.) It is said that "all outgoing seems to be the work of Christ, all return to God the work of the Spirit." If this means anything, it means what is non-biblical and pagan.

These and like attempts at a classification on this basis of the works of grace result from a practical and imperfect induction. They are mechanical efforts. It is trying to force an analysis where it does not belong. The works of grace cannot be divided into three classes and assigned to the three divine persons as a number of objects

may be put into three classes and placed in three rooms. Christian character and the Holy Trinity will not yield themselves to so crude a treatment. A false and forced analysis does not create clearness, but confusion. Again let us remember that in studying the Holy Trinity we are dealing with life and persons, not with mechanics and logic.

9. That the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are eternal and divine persons and yet are one in being and nature, essence, and energy, is not only the simple truth as seen in many passages of Scripture, but it is a fundamental truth in the gospel. It is not an overstatement to say that without it there is no gospel. Without it the most assuring sentence of the Bible, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," has no meaning, the doctrine of the atonement is a fiction, salvation from sin a delusion, and the preaching of the Cross a crime. Without the Trinity God is not the Christian's God, "Our Father who art in heaven"; he is the pantheist's God, the Unitarian's god, the Christian Scientist's god, the Mohammedan's god, the idolater's god, a god made by human hands or human minds, it matters little which.

Neander, realizing the truth of what we are observing, said of the doctrine of the Trinity,



"We recognize therein the essential contents of Christianity summed up in brief."

10. Christian experience is also a mighty confirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

If Jesus be not God, to say that he is God is a lie, a corrupting, damning lie. Every lie degrades. There is nothing that does degrade, but a lie. But to worship Christ is elevating. He who goes down on his knees before Christ immediately feels himself lifted up. Slavery to Christ is freedom. To serve him is to reign. To be his subject is to be a king. If Christ be not God, to consider him God is idolatry, and all idolatry is debasing, bedulling, deadening. Where is supersitition? It is not in him who cries, "Jesus of Nazareth, I worship thee." All true science is born in such a mind; because it is truth.

Again if the Holy Spirit is not God, it is idolatry to say so. But where is piety? Who is the real saint? Who is it that is living the sacrificial life? It is none other than the Christian who believes in, honors, is led by, and is full of the Holy Spirit. Let one deny the Holy Spirit, or say that he is an impersonal influence, or speak of him carelessly, or think of him unworthily, and to such an one the door of usefulness is closed and progress in Christian character is at a standstill. Charles Kingsley, conscious of this truth,

said that "whether the doctrine of the Trinity is in the Bible or no, it ought to be there, because our spiritual nature cries out for it."

To the great One in Three  
The highest praises be,  
Hence evermore;  
His sovereign majesty  
May we in glory see,  
And to eternity  
Love and adore.







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